

Gal 10 2a

THE CLOUDS

OF

ARISTOPHANES:

Acted at ATHENS in the second Year of Olymp. LXXXIX.

AMINIAS *being* ARCHON.

GRATIS INGENIUM, GRATIS DEDIT ORB ROTUNDOS
MUSA LOQUI.

B



DEDICATION

TO THE

AUTHOR

OF THE

Essay on the Principles of Translation.

SIR,

THE approbation, which you have been pleased to express in your essay above named, of some fragments of the Greek comic poets, rendered into English by me, and inserted in the volumes of *The Observer*, encourages me to present to you this specimen of my humble endeavours upon a larger scale. It is a work of difficulty, and I probably should not have had spirits to have resumed the undertaking, and conducted it to the end, had not your very flattering opinion of my former attempts given me courage for the task. Aspiring to deserve your praise, as the test of my success with the public, I have now compleated what I had only given a specimen of in my *Observer*, No. 141, and beg leave to present you with an entire translation of the comedy of *The Clouds*.

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Having

Having fully treated of this comedy and its author, I have only to remark upon this occasion, that there is little which I now wish to add, and nothing that I have since found reason to retract. I flatter myself that these essays contain as fair and as full a discussion of the subject as modern criticism can require, and that my remarks upon Ælian's charge are satisfactory for the purpose of confuting his calumny, and vindicating the character of Aristophanes from any collusion with Anytus and Melitus, who did not bring Socrates to trial, till eighteen years at least after this comedy was acted at Athens.

I do not pretend to justify the poet's motives for this personal attack upon Socrates and his school, further than by refuting imputations, which are false upon the face of them. I think it is clear he was not suborned by bribes to the attack; and I further think that any curious enquirer, who will take a fair and candid review of the period, in which this satyrical drama was produced, will not fail to find very natural inducements for a comic poet to draw forth the weapons of his ridicule against the schools and academies then existing; and I do not scruple to add, even against that very school in particular, which is here singled out as the object of contempt.

You will be pleased to take notice, that I call the motives *natural*; I do not go the length to say that they

*

they were just, or liberal, or such as our more gentle manners can in this age approve.

The philosophers in general, and Socrates in particular, had been adverse to the comic stage; they had so far carried their point as to silence it, and kept the theatre shut during two years, whilst it laid under proscription by the archon Myrrichides. The unpopularity of this measure compelled the magistracy to open it again, when a powerful and exasperated triumvirate of authors retook possession of it, and all Athens flocked to the *Winter Amusements* of Cratinus, the *New Moons* of Eupolis, and the *Acharnensians* of our Aristophanes.

Can we wonder if these ingenious exiles made their persecutors smart under the lash of their wit and ridicule? It was *natural* at least that a race so irritable should retaliate upon their opponents, and avail themselves of the triumph they had gained, and the interest they had established with the people, who were to form their audiences. Of the three, Aristophanes was much the most moderate; this was remarked by Persius many ages after; and Horace says, they were only then severe, *Si quis erat dignus describi*.

Eupolis attacked the areopagite Autolycus in two several comedies, which he stamped with his name, and in which he personified him on the stage. He did the same by Alcibiades in his *Baptæ*, by

Cimon in his Lacedæmonians, and by the orator Hyperbolus in his Marica. Characters so popular, so conspicuous and public as these, did not awe that daring poet. Cratinus did not fall short of him, either in talents or in the bold use he made of them. In a few years after these events of expulsion and subsequent restoration, Aristophanes wrote his first comedy of the Clouds, and in the following year this second of the same title, after the example of Eupolis, who observed the like periods in his first and second Autolycus.

Whether the philosophers were or were not fit objects of comic satire, must be left to your's and the reader's judgment; it is enough that war was declared between the poets and them, to make the consequences *natural*, which resulted from their animosity.

To convince you that Aristophanes was not the single champion of the comic corps, I must recal to your recollection the hostile proceedings of other leaders against the common enemy. Alexis made the life and actions of that impostor Pythagoras the foundation of an entire comedy; he also handled Plato very roughly in no less than four several dramas, notwithstanding the partiality of that philosopher, who wrote *love* epigrams upon him without softening his rancour, or receiving one kind smile in return.

Anaxan-

Anaxandrides was another wicked wit, who not only vented his gall upon the divine Plato and the Academy, but also attacked the magistracy of Athens, who resented the satire so deeply, as to bring him to trial, and by one of the most cruel sentences upon record condemned him to be starved to death.

It was Plato's hard fate to fall under the lash of Epicrates also, who in one of his plays ridiculed the frivolous disquisitions of the Academy with great comic humour. Pythagoras again came under the stroke of Aristophon, who rallied him on his juggling tricks with great success,

Heniochus the comic poet brought Thorucion, a contemporary, to the dramatic halbert, and exhibited his character on the stage in a play, which he called after his name.

Plato, a poet of the same department, wrote a personal comedy against Cleophon the general. Pherecrates lashed Alcibiades, and Hermippus lampooned Pericles. But Amipias, a contemporary of Aristophanes, wrote a comedy intitled, The Philosopher's Cloak, and was so audacious as to set up Socrates himself for the butt of his ridicule.

You see, therefore, that our author was not alone in his hostility against Socrates: the schools were in their turn silenced by authority, and some are hardy enough to say, that it would have been happy for the

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state,

Hippias was lashed by Crates ἐν Πανόρταις.

state, had they never again been suffered to teach. The Lacedæmonians were of that opinion, and took firm measures to prevent their settling amongst them: they did not seem to think any good end could be derived from their system of education; they had no opinion of that ingenious logic, which *could make the worse appear the better reason*; and they were anxious to preserve their native simple character from contamination: I am inclined to believe they were wiser in their generation than the people of Athens: certain it is, that this city was, in point of morals, extremely dissolute at the period when this comedy was acted, and yet it was then thronged with philosophers.

The unbounded applause bestowed upon the author of *The Clouds*, and the unanimous decree in his favour, above all his competitors, seem to bespeak no very partial disposition in his audience towards the objects of his ridicule; whatever might have been the merit of his comedy in point of wit, had there been absolutely no foundation for his satire, but mere rancour and malice, the attack would have been too barefaced to be endured; and had Aristophanes been suborned by Anytus and Melitus, as *Ælian* suggests, is it to be supposed they would not have seized the favourable moment of his triumph to have pushed their suit against Socrates? I think therefore, without affecting to justify the personality of the piece, we
may

may fairly presume that the author was no otherwise actuated than by the spirit of the corps for raillery and retaliation, and having, like his brother poets, resolved upon turning out against the philosophers, he boldly took his aim at the most illustrious champion of their order.

I am now to solicit your favourable perusal of my performance, which I doubt not but you will read with all candid allowances for the many difficulties I have had to surmount, of all which you are so perfect a judge. I flatter myself you will find it faithful to the original, and as close as the languages can be made to approach, without violating the harmony of the metre, or that free air of originality, which every translator should make it his endeavour to preserve; in short, if you shall perceive that I have been duly attentive to your own admirable rules, which it has been my earnest study to pursue, I shall esteem it the most flattering presage of success with the rest of my readers.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your much obliged,

and most obedient servant,

Richard Cumberland,

Dramatis Personæ.

STREPSIADES.

PHIDIPPIDES.

SERVANT *to* **STREPSIADES.**

DISCIPLES *of* **SOCRATES.**

SOCRATES.

CHORUS *of* **CLOUDS.**

DICÆUS, *or the* **JUST** *Character.*

ADICUS, *or the* **UNJUST.**

PASIAS.

AMYNIAS.

WITNESSES.

CHÆREPHON.

SCENE, ATHENS.

THE CLOUDS

OF

ARISTOPHANES.

(Strepsiades is discovered in his chamber, Phidippides sleeping in his bed. Time, before break of day.)

STREPSIADES.

AH me, ah me ! will this night never end ?
 Oh kingly Jove, shall there be no more day ?
 And yet the cock sung out long time ago ;
 I heard him—but my people lie and snore,
 Snore in defiance, for the rascals know
 It is their ¹ privilege in time of war,
 Which with it's other plagues brings this upon us,
 That we mayn't rouse these vermin with a cudgel,
 There's my young hopeful too, he sleeps it through,
 Snug under five fat blankets at the least.

I might as soundly. Would I could sleep so sound ! but my poor eyes
 Have no sleep in them ; what with debts and duns

¹ The Athenians had granted them certain exemptions for their services on board the fleet in the Lacedæmonian war,

And

And stable-keepers bills, which this fine spark
Heaps on my back, I lie awake the whilst:

male add

And what cares he but to coil up his locks,
Ride, drive his horses, dream of 'em all night,
Whilst I, poor devil, may go hang—for now

m. a

* The moon in her last quarter wains apace,
And my usurious creditors are gaping.
What hoa! a light! bring me my tablets, boy!
That I may set down all, and sum them up,
Debts, creditors, and interest upon interest—

(*Boy enters with a light and tablets.*)

Let me see where I am and what the total—
* Twelve pounds to Pafias—Hah! to Pafias twelve!
Out on it, and for what? A horse forfooth,
* Right noble by the mark—Curse on such marks!
Wou'd I had giv'n this eye from out this head,
Ere I had paid the purchase of this jennet!

PHIDIPPIDES.

25 Shame on you, Philo!—Keep within your ring.

σείκον

* The term for enforcing payments and taking out execution
against debtors, according to usage, was in near approach.

* The Athenian pound was of the value of one hundred
drachmas, and each drachm of six oboli. The pound may be
computed at three of our's, which gives the price of the horse
about £. 36.

* In the original the mark is pointed out to have been that of
the *koppa*, whence these horses were called *koppatiæ*, as those
stamped with the *sigma* were named *samphoræ*. The *bucephali*
had the mark of the ox's head, and probably Alexander's fa-
vourite charger was of this sort.

STREPSIADES.

ARISTOPHANES.

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STREPSIADES.

There 'tis ! that's it ! the bane of all my peace—
He's racing in his sleep.

hanc. 17. 6

PHIDIPPIDES.

A heat—a heat !

How many turns to a heat ?

STREPSIADES.

More than enough ;

You've giv'n me turns in plenty—I am jaded.

30 But to my list—What name stands next to Pafias ?

⁵ Amynias—three good pounds—still for the race—

m. add.

⁶ A chariot mounted on it's wheels compleat.

PHIDIPPIDES.

Dismount ! unharness and away !

ἐξελίσας

STREPSIADES.

I thank you ;

You have unharnes'd me : I am dismounted,

And with a vengeance—All my goods in pawn,

Fines, forfeitures, and penalties in plenty.

⁵ Aminias was the archon when this comedy was acted, and the poet makes use of his name in the way of ridicule, spelling it however *Amynias* instead of Aminias. At length the persons of the archons were, by a special law, protected from ridicule and detraction.

⁶ The chariot or curriele here alluded to was built extremely light, with a seat for the driver, and wheels of a stated construction, for the race. The price annexed to it bespeaks it to have been of slight and simple workmanship.

PHIDIPPIDES.

*Εἰδὼν, in truth —
what Τί*

PHIDIPPIDES.

(wakes.)

My father ! why so restless ? ~~who~~ has vex'd you ?

STREPSIADES.

° The sheriff vexes me ; he breaks my rest.

PHIDIPPIDES.

*Σαυροῖς does not
signify self-tormentor.*

Peace, self-tormentor, let me sleep !

STREPSIADES.

*Τί σμικρὸν,
a little.*

Sleep on !

τεῖχος

male additur.

But take this with you ; all these debts of mine
Will double on your head : A plague confound
That curst match-maker, who drew me in
To wed, forsooth, that precious dam of thine.
I liv'd at ease in the country, coarsely clad,
Rough, free, and full withal as oil and honey
And store of stock could fill me, till I took,
Clown as I was, this limb of the ° Alcmæon's,
This vain, extravagant, high-blooded dame :
Rare bed-fellows and dainty—were we not ?
30 I, smelling of the wine-vat, figs and fleeces,
The produce of my farm, ° all essence she,

Saffron

° The Athenian *demarchus*, here rendered *sheriff*, had, amongst many popular concerns, the custody of all goods pledged to creditors.

° Strepsiades says he married his wife out of the family of Megacles, descended from Alcmæon, and one of the first nobility in Athens.

° This is one of many passages in this author, where the language of translation cannot be made to embrace the full spirit of the

Saffron and harlot's kisses, paint and washes,
A pamper'd wanton—Idle I'll not call her;
She took due pains in faith to work my ruin,
Which made me tell her, pointing to this cloak,
Now thread-bare on my shoulders—see, good wife,
This is your work—in troth you toil too hard.

(Boy re-enters.)

Master, the lamp has drank up all it's oil.

drunk

STREPSIADES.

Aye, tis a drunken lamp; the more fault your's;
Whelp, you shall howl for this.

Wither, I howl for this

BOY.

Why? for what fault?

STREPSIADES.

For cramming such a greedy wick with oil.

(Exit Boy.)

60 Well! in good time this hopeful heir was born;
Then I and my beloved fell to wrangling
About the naming of the brat—My wife

*This joke is Mr. C's.
but the drunk up.
& drunken, do not
suit the greedy, wh.
follows. This is
awkwardly man-
aged.*

the original. Strepsiades, describing the character of his wife as contrasted with himself, says (in the phrase of Eretria) that she was *ἑρκετοειδής*, lavish in the ornaments of her person as Cæsyra, made up by all the artifice of the toilette, (or in one word *Cæsyrafied*.) There were two ladies of this name, one the wife of Alcmaeon, the other of Pisistratus, and as Strepsiades has already placed his wife in the family of the former, it seems most likely that his ridicule points at the elder Cæsyra, though both were examples equally apposite.

ce

ce

*The Schol. V. 48.
refers to the latter.
Would & to the former, V.
46. Mr. C. is
right—*

Would dub her colt ¹⁰ Xanthippus or Charippus,
 Or it might be Callipides, she car'd not
 So 'twere a horse, which shar'd the name—but I
 Stuck for his grand-father Phidonides;
 At last when neither could prevail, the matter
 Was compromis'd by calling him Phidippides:
 Then she began to fondle her sweet babe,
 And taking him by th' hand—lambkin, she cried,
 When thou art some years older thou shalt drive,
 70 Megacles-like, thy chariot to the city,
 Rob'd in a saffron mantle—No, quoth I,
 Not so, my boy, but thou shalt drive thy goats,
 When thou art able, from the fields of ¹¹ Phelle,
 Clad in a woollen jacket like thy father:
 But he is deaf to all these frugal rules,
 And drives me on the ^{full} gallop to my ruin;
 Therefore all night I call my thoughts to council,
 And after long debate find one chance left,
 To which if I can lead him all is safe,
 If not—but soft? 'tis time that I should wake him.

m. add.

*Strepes was a
 garment made of
 goat's skin.*

¹⁰ In all these names of the wife's proposing she keeps her own family in view. Xanthippus and Charippus are proper names; the first was the father of Pericles: Callias was an Olympic victor, and that she ingeniously compounds. The name Phidonides, which Strepsiades contends for, is a compounded term, that implies a *man addicted to parsimony*; the compromise therefore for Phidippides is so contrived as to suit both parties.

¹¹ A rocky district of Attica, which afforded pasturage only to goats.

But

ARISTOPHANES.

17

80 But how to soothe him to the task—Phidippides!
Precious Phidippides!

This is an awkward translation of the diminutive.

PHIDIPPIDES:

What now, my father?

STREPSIADES:

Kiss me, my boy! reach me thine hand—

PHIDIPPIDES:

Declare,

'Idoō. Tī' ēōlv; Vid. p. 35.

What wou'd you?

STREPSIADES:

Dost thou love me, firrah? speak!

PHIDIPPIDES:

Aye, by equestrian Neptune!

STREPSIADES:

Name not him,

Name not that charioteer; he is my bane,
The source of all my sorrow—but, my son,
If thou dost love me, prove it by obedience.

*'Ἰππιὸν ὡς ἐφάρη
μὴ καὶ τοῦτον ἵππον
ἔχειν ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ.*

bane 13.1

PHIDIPPIDES:

In what must I obey?

STREPSIADES:

Reform your habits;

Quit them at once, and what I shall prescribe
That do!

PHIDIPPIDES:

And what is it that you prescribe?

STREPSIADES:

C

90.

STREPSIADES.

But wilt thou do't?

PHIDIPPIDES.

Yea,¹² by Dionysus!

STREPSIADES.

Tis well: get up! come hither, boy; look out!
 Yon little wicket and the hut hard by—
 Do'st see them?

PHIDIPPIDES.

Clearly. What of that same hut?

STREPSIADES.

Why that's the council-chamber of all wisdom:
 There the choice spirits dwell, who teach the world
 That heav'n's great concave is one mighty oven,
 And men it's burning embers: these are they,
¹³ Who can shew pleaders how to twist a cause,
 So you'll but pay them for it, right or wrong.

PHIDIPPIDES.

¹² The poet is duely attentive to character in these asseverations, which he puts into the mouth of his young man, making him first swear by *equestrian Neptune*, and when driven from that resorting to Dionysus, the patron of the feast now in actual celebration, called the *Dionysia*: this was also the more apposite, as it was now this very comedy was in representation. I have therefore accorded to the original term, in preference to that of *Bacchus*, which Brunck and other translators have adopted.

¹³ How cunningly the poet slides in his satire before he betrays the personality attached to it! He exposes the doctrines before he gives the names of these philosophers, and those doctrines he describes.

pay them — It does not appear, that Socrates taught for money. Xenoph. Mem. Socr. Plato. Meno. which ph. have been mentioned, by Mr. C.

ἦν τὸν Διονύσου.
 the 2^d syll. sh^d be short,
 and the 3^d long. the same
 error in p. 20.4.

ἔλεον. What in truth,

νικῶν

PHIDIPPIDES.

100 And how do you call them?

STREPSIADES.

14 Troth I know not that,

But they are men, who take a world of pains;
Wondrous good men and able.

PHIDIPPIDES.

Out upon 'em!

Poor rogues, I know them now; you mean those scabs,
Those squalid, barefoot, beggarly impostors,
The mighty cacodæmons of whose sect
Are 15 Socrates and Chærephon. Away!

STREPSIADES.

describes to be of that species of sophistry, by which men are taught to evade the laws, and defraud their creditors, than which there cannot well be any greater offence against society.

14 It is worth a remark, that to this question of the son, the rustic father pleads ignorance, by which the poet artfully transfers the first naming of Socrates and Chærephon from that person, who must have spoken of them respectfully to him, who now announces them to the audience with all the contempt and obloquy peculiar to his character. This is one amongst many instances of the poet's address, which the critic cannot fail to discover in this opening scene.

15 Had it happily so chanced, that the first comedy of *The Clouds* had been preserved, it would have been a most gratifying circumstance to have traced the author's contrivances for turning his experience of a past miscarriage to account in a second attempt. I think it highly probable that this of coupling Chærephon with Socrates was one of his expedients to avoid the shock of bringing him too abruptly before the audience; and though

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1 The coupling is strongly marked in the Greek by the singular *τὸν ὁ κακοδαίμων* Σ. η' X.

THE CLOUDS OF

STREPSIADES.

Hush, hush ! be still ; don't vent such foolish prattle ;
But if you'll take my counsel, join their college
And quit your riding school.

PHIDIPPIDES.

Not I, so help me

u-u- Kid. 18.4. Dionysus our patron ! though you brib'd me
With all the racers that Leogarus
Breeds from his ¹⁶ Phasian stud.

STREPSIADES.

Dear, darling lad,

Prythee be rul'd, and learn.

PHIDIPPIDES.

What shall I learn ?

odi libi -

no management might serve for bringing over his determined supporters, yet by grounding his attack upon the principles of universal justice, and classing him with an associate so contemptible as Chazrephon, nicknamed the Bat, he takes the likeliest means of interesting the audience in general for his comedy.

*from the darkness
of his complexion,
and the thinness of
his voice. x. 10
M. G. p. 24. n. 19.*

¹⁶ Whether the *phasian* are to be understood literally as pheasants, or as horses so described, is a disputed point with the grammarians. Leogarus was famous for his breed of horses ; he was also a notorious glutton ; his character of course accords to each interpretation. I have inclin'd to the latter, as thinking it more in character of the speaker, and as I find the country on the banks of the Phasis celebrated for it's breed of horses, I prefer that construction to any other.

M. G. is right

STREPSIADES.

ARISTOPHANES.

21

STREPSIADES.

They have a choice of logic; ¹⁷ this for justice,
my brewik. That for injustice: ⁺ learn that latter art,
 And all these creditors, that now beset me,
 Shall never touch a drachm that I owe them.

ἀπὸ τοῦ λόγου

διὰ τοῦ

PHIDIPPIDES.

I'll learn of no such masters, nor be made
 A scare-crow and a may-game to my comrades:
.add. I have no zeal for starving.

STREPSIADES.

No, nor I
 For feasting you and your fine pamper'd cattle
m.add. At free cost any longer—Horse and foot
 To the crows I bequeath you. So be gone.

the emphasis
falls on these

PHIDIPPIDES.

Well, sir, I have an uncle rich and noble;
 Megacles will not let me be unhors'd;
 To him I go: I'll trouble you no longer *. (Exit.)

I'll be Megacles

STREPSIADES

¹⁷ The great aim of this comedy is to hold up to ridicule and detestation that Socratic mode of arguing by quirk and quibble, which is here term'd the unjust, and elsewhere the new sophistry. As this will be brought into full discussion in a subsequent scene, I shall postpone any further remarks for the present.

* The poet in this opening scene exhibits a considerable share of dramatic skill and contrivance: It developes just as much of the fable, as is proper for the audience to be apprized of, and prepares them for the introduction of the principal character after a very artful manner. The intervention of the servant boy, first

STREPSIADES *alone.*

*What in Gr. is said
metaphorically,
Mr. C. appears to
understand literally.
cally.*

He has thrown me to the ground, but I'll not lie there;
I'll up, and with permission of the gods
Try if I cannot learn these arts myself:
But being old, sluggish, and dull of wit,
How am I sure these subtleties won't pose me?

*Sluggish &
dull of wit are
nearly synoni-
mous — ἄπληστον
ῥησιν is
omitted —*

with the tablets, and next with his report of the lamp, together with the speakings of Phidippides in his sleep, are pleasantly and ingeniously thrown in to break the soliloquies of the old man, whose story, though humorously told, would else be too long in detail. The part, which the son holds in the scene, is also very characteristic, and his sallies in his dream (in which the author seems to have Æschylus in his eye) have a great deal of point and stage effect. The same may be remarked of the art observed in introducing the first mention of Socrates and his school, and the explanation Strepsiades gives of the purposes for which he would have his son resort thither. The base nature of those purposes and the abhorrence of the young man are cunning preparatives for the introduction of Socrates, and for biasing the spectators in favour of the personal attack, which the poet is now meditating against that eminent philosopher. The attempt was daring, and had once already failed; warned by this miscarriage he now lays his plan with more precaution, and it is not easy to conceive any better generalship than he displays upon this second attack. If there is any thing in this scene open to critical reprehension, I conceive it to be that the speakings of Strepsiades are of a higher cast here than in his succeeding dialogues with Socrates, where the poet (for the sake no doubt of contrasting his rusticity with the finesse of the philosopher) has lowered him to the stile and sentiment of an arrant clown. Of this the reader will be able to judge as he advances; but I dare say the humour of the dialogue will atone for any small departure from uniformity of character, if any such in fact does exist.

Well!

Well! I'll attempt it: what avails complaint?
 Why don't I knock and enter?—Hoe! within there!—
(Knocks violently at the door; a disciple calls out from within.)

DISCIPLE.

Go hang yourself! and give the crows a dinner—
 What noisy fellow art thou at the door?

STREPSIADES.

Strepsiades of ¹⁸ Cicyna, son of Phidon.

DISCIPLE.

135 Whoe'er thou art, 'fore Heaven, thou art a fool
 Not to respect these doors; battering so loud,
 And kicking with such vengeance, you have marr'd
 The ripe conception of my pregnant brain,
 And brought on a miscarriage.

*The mother of
 Socrates was a
 Midwife.*

STREPSIADES.

Oh! the pity—
 Pardon my ignorance: I'm country bred
 And far a-field am come: I pray you tell me
 What curious thought my luckless din has strangled,
 Just as your brain was hatching,

*Too much
 dilated.*

DISCIPLE.

These are things
 140 We never speak of but amongst ourselves.

STREPSIADES.

Speak boldly then to me, for I am come

²⁸ A citizen of the tribe of Acamas.

To be amongst you, and partake the secrets
Of your profound academy.

DISCIPLE.

Enough!

I will impart, but set it down in thought
Amongst our mysteries—This is the question,
As it was put but now to Chærephon,
By our great master Socrates, to answer—
/45 How many of his own lengths at one spring
A flea can hop—for we did see one vault
From '9 Chærephon's black eye-brow to the head
Of the philosopher.

STREPSIADES.

And how did t'other
Contrive to measure this?

DISCIPLE.

Most accurately:

σεξίνωτα.

He dipt the insect's feet in melted wax,
/50 Which, hard'ning into sandals as it cool'd,
Gave him the space by rule infallible.

STREPSIADES.

Imperial Jove! what subtilty of thought!

DISCIPLE.

But there's a deeper question yet behind;
What wou'd you say to that?

*ελεον
φερονωτα 135*

¹⁹ Chærephon was Twarthy, and on that account, as well as
for his shrill and querulous speech, nicknam'd *the Bat*. Socrates
was bald.

STREPSIADES.

ARISTOPHANES.

25

STREPSIADES.

I pray, impart it.

DISCIPLE.

'Twas put to Socrates, if he could say,
When a gnat hum'd, whether the sound did issue
From mouth or tail.

*Cherephon is
named in Arist.
as the Querist.*

STREPSIADES.

Aye; marry, what said he?

DISCIPLE.

160 He said your gnat doth blow his trumpet backwards
From a sonorous cavity within him,
Which being fill'd with breath, and forc'd along
The narrow pipe or rectum of his body,
Doth vent itself in a loud hum behind.

Αερόν.

STREPSIADES.

165 Hah! then I see the podex of your gnat
Is trumpet fashion'd—Oh! the blessings on him
For this discovery; well may he escape
20 The law's strict scrutiny, who thus developes
The anatomy of a gnat.

DISCIPLE.

Nor is this all;

Another grand experiment was blasted

170 By a curst cat.

αυαλαβωτο.

20 The dramatic critic will see the point of this inference, and give the poet credit for it.

STREPSIADES.

STREPSIADES.

As how, good sir; discuss?

DISCIPLE.

One night as he was gazing at the moon,
Curious and all intent upon her motions,
A cat on the house ridge was at her needs,
And squirted in his face.

STREPSIADES.

Bespew her for it!

Yet I must laugh no less to think a cat
Shou'd so bespatter Socrates.

DISCIPLE.

Last night

We were bilk'd of our supper.

STREPSIADES.

Were you so?

What did your master substitute instead?

DISCIPLE.

Why to say truth, he sprinkled a few ashes
Upon the board, then with a little broach,
Crook'd for the nonce, pretending to describe
A circle, neatly filch'd away a cloak.

STREPSIADES.

180 Why talk we then of ²¹ Thales? Open to me,

Open

²¹ It was a custom with Aristophanes to call a man, who was
devoted to astronomical studies *a Thales*. We are therefore to
understand

ὁ βελώνης

22 Open the school and let me see your master :
I am on fire to enter—Come, unbar !

(The School is disclosed.)

O Hercules, defend me ! who are these ?
What kind of cattle have we here in view ?

DISCIPLE.

185 Where is the wonder ? What do they resemble ?

STREPSIADES.

Methinks they're like our Spartan prisoners,

understand that Socrates is represented as engaging the attention of his pupils by some astronomical schemes, traced out on the table, whilst he took the opportunity of purloining a cloak. This would have been a very dangerous joke for the poet to have risked, if some such idle stories had not been in circulation ; but this was the case, and other authors are quoted as having made the same charge.

22 Aristophanes well knew how impossible it was for the friends of Socrates to stem the laugh of a theatre ; he perfectly understood the use of that weapon, which in his hands was so formidable, and devotes the whole preceding scene to ridicule of that farcical kind, which was so well adapted to the false taste of the Athenians, to whom even the grossest buffooneries were acceptable. Having therefore in his first scene set out by stating the iniquitous sophistry of the Socratic school, he next proceeds to ridicule their frivolous enquiries and experiments, and with this view introduces a disciple, who with much solemnity is made to betray the secrets of his master, and to tell such tales to the disgrace of his philosophy, and even of his honesty, as are calculated, with the aid of the old man's comments, to raise a laugh against Socrates, just in the moment, when he is prepared to open the scene of his academy, and exhibit his person in the most ridiculous attitude his fancy could devise.

Captur'd

Captur'd at Pylos. What are they in search of?
Why are their eyes so rivetted to th' earth?

DISCIPLE.

There their researches center.

STREPSIADES.

²³ 'Tis for onions

'They are in quest—Come, lads, give o'er your search;
I'll shew you what you want, a noble plat,
All round and sound—but soft! what mean those gentry,
Who dip their heads so low?

DISCIPLE.

Marry, because

Their studies lead that way: They are now diving
To the dark realms of Tartarus and Night,

STREPSIADES.

This in the sing. n. is not wrong. But why are all their cruppers mounted up?

DISCIPLE.

Ingeniously, but not literally.

To practise them in star-gazing, and teach them
Their proper elevations—but no more:
Come, fellow-students, let us hence, or ere
The master comes—

STREPSIADES.

Nay, prythee let 'em stay

And be of council with me in my business.

²³ He had before said they were like the Lacedæmonian prisoners, emaciated and half starved, he therefore supposes them on the search for food and not for science.

DISCIPLE.

DISCIPLE.

Impossible; they cannot give the time.

ἡπὸς τὸν δέξω

STREPSIADES.

200 Now for the love of Heav'n, what have we here?

Explain their uses to me. (*observing the apparatus.*)

DISCIPLE.

This machine

Is for astronomy—

STREPSIADES.

And this?

DISCIPLE.

For geometry.

STREPSIADES.

As how?

DISCIPLE.

For measuring the earth.

STREPSIADES.

Indeed!

What by the lot?

DISCIPLE.

No, faith, Sir, by the lump;

Ev'n the whole globe at once.

STREPSIADES.

Well said, in troth.

205 A quaint device and made for general use.

DISCIPLE,

DISCIPLE.

Look now, this line marks the circumference
Of the whole earth, d'ye see—This spot is Athens—

STREPSIADES.

Athens ! go to, ²⁴ I see no courts are fitting ;
Therefore I can't believe you.

DISCIPLE.

Nay, in truth
This very tract is Attica.

STREPSIADES.

And where,
Where is my own Cicynna ?

DISCIPLE.

Here it lies :
And this Eubœa—Mark ! how far it runs—

STREPSIADES.

How far it runs ! Yes, Pericles has made it
Run far enough from us—Where's Lacedæmon ?

DISCIPLE.

Here ; close to Athens.

STREPSIADES.

Ah ! how much too close—
Prythee, good friends, take that bad neighbour from us.

²⁴ This is the same sort of reproach, which Demosthenes afterwards made use of. Their character in short was frivolous, and their caprice unpardonable. This whole scene is raillery of a ferocious sort, and in this place, where it was so much his interest to keep up the laugh, unsuitably applied.

I

DISCIPLE.

215

*Supp. 215 is
thinking of his
Debt, as in p. 29.
1. ult. m*

DISCIPLE.

That's not for us to do.

STREPSIADES.

The worse luck your's !

But look ! who's this suspended in a ²³ basket ?*(Socrates is discovered.)*

DISCIPLE.

This, this is he.

STREPSIADES.

What he ?

DISCIPLE.

Why, Socrates.

STREPSIADES.

Hah ! Socrates ?—Make up to him and roar,
 Bid him come down ; roar lustily.

DISCIPLE.

Not I :

Do it yourself ; I've other things to mind. *(exit.)*

STREPSIADES.

Hoa ! Socrates—What hoa, my little Socrates !—

²³ It is clear that the philosopher does not remain suspended in his basket during the preceding scene, because the disciple warns away his fellow students, lest their master should discover them. If the poet had spared his politics about Eubœa and Lacedæmon, I should conceive his audience might have been in a better humour for receiving an incident of so singular and daring a sort, as the debût of the philosopher in a basket ; but no doubt he knew the people he had to deal with.

SOCRATES.

SOCRATES.

²⁵ Mortal, how now! Thou insect of a day,
What wou'd'st thou?

STREPSIADES.

I wou'd know what thou art doing.

SOCRATES.

225 I tread in air, contemplating the sun.

STREPSIADES.

Ah, then I see you're basketed so high,
That you look down upon the Gods—Good hope,
You'll lower a peg on earth.

SOCRATES.

Sublime in air,
Sublime in thought I carry my mind with me,
It's cogitations all assimilated
To the pure atmosphere, in which I float;
Lower me to earth, and my mind's subtle powers;
Seiz'd by contagious dulness, lose their spirit;
For the dry earth drinks up the generous sap,
The vegetating vigor of philosophy,
And leaves it a mere husk.

STREPSIADES.

What do you say?

235

Philosophy has sapt your vigor? Fie upon it.

²⁶ To give the philosopher a mock sublimity, he elevates him above the heads of his fellow creatures by the vehicle of a basket, and then makes him speak in a style correspondent to the loftiness of his station, a language suited to the character of a demigod.

But

πάχει δὲ τὰ αὐτὰ
τοῦτο καὶ τὸ κάρ-
σαμα.

ἡ φρονὴ, ἔλκει
τὴν ἰσχυρὰν εἰς
τὸ κάρσαμα;

ARISTOPHANES.

33

But come, my precious fellow, come down quickly,
And teach me those fine things ^{I'm} ~~here~~ in quest of.

SOCRATES.

And what fine things are they?

STREPSIADES.

A new receipt

For sending off my creditors, and foiling them

By the art logical; for you shall know

By debts, pawns, pledges, usuries, executions
I am rackt and rent in tatters.

SOCRATES.

Why permit it?

What strange infatuation seiz'd your senses?

STREPSIADES.

The horse consumption, a devouring plague;

But so you'll enter me amongst your scholars,

Aud tutor me like them to bilk my creditors,

245 Name your own price, and by the Gods I swear

I'll pay you the last drachm.

SOCRATES.

By what Gods?

Answer that first; for your Gods are not mine.

STREPSIADES.

27 How swear you then? As the Byzantians swear

By their base iron coin?

SOCRATES.

27 This whole dialogue, between two characters so forcibly contrasted, is conceived in the very best style of the author. That

D

this

ἐνδοξένος κέρειν λέγει

τὸν ἑαυτοῦ τοῦτο
λέγειν

θεοὶ ἡμῶν νόμισμα
ἐν ἑστέῃ θεοὶ with
we are not [in money]
[is] a money coin.

SOCRATES.

250.

Art thou ambitious

To be instructed in celestial matters,
And taught to know them clearly?

STREPSIADES.

Marry am I,

So they be to my purpose, and celestial.

SOCRATES.

What, if I bring you to a conference
With my own proper Goddesses, the Clouds?

STREPSIADES.

'Tis what I wish devoutly.

SOCRATES.

Come, sit down;

Repose yourself upon this couch.

this eminent philosopher was not an orthodox heathen, may well be believed; that the poet himself was not less of a free thinker, may fairly be inferred from a variety of passages in his surviving comedies, where the Deities and even Jupiter himself are treated with so little ceremony, or rather with such sovereign contempt, that we must suppose no danger was attached to the avowal of these free opinions, and of course no serious design to entrap the life of Socrates by this raillery could be in the contemplation of Aristophanes at the time. It seems to be nothing more than a mere vehicle for introducing his chorus of fanciful beings, in like manner with those of his *frogs*, *birds*, and *wasps*, which are all cast in the same whimsical characters with this of *The Clouds*. It is however a very apposite allusion of the clown, when he asks him if he swears, as the Byzantians do, by the beggarly oath of their own base coining.

STREPSIADES.

ὀρθῶς; rightly.

ὡς δὲ σινεπεῖος ἴσθις.

ἱερὰν οὐκ ἔχοντα
sacred pallets bed,
or stool.

ARISTOPHANES.

35

STREPSIADES.

'Tis done.

SOCRATES.

Now take this chaplet—wear it.

STREPSIADES.

Why this chaplet?

Wou'd'st make of me another ²⁸ Athamas,
And sacrifice me to a cloud?

SOCRATES.

Fear nothing;

It is a ceremony indispensable
At all initiations.

STREPSIADES.

What to gain?

SOCRATES.

26a. T'will sift your faculties as fine as powder,
Bolt 'em like meal, grind 'em as light as dust;
Only be patient.

STREPSIADES.

Marry, you'll go near

To make your words good; an' you pound me thus
You'll make me very dust and nothing else.

SOCRATES.

Keep silence then, and listen to a prayer,
Which fits the gravity of age to hear—

²⁸ Rescued by Hercules, when on the point of being immolated
to the manes of Phryxus. Helle, the sister of Phryxus;
who were the Children D² of Athamas, & Oh!
Raphael.

*I'm naked.
See, the door.
18v. Vol. p. 17.*

b. add.

our hypothesis.

What gain?

*1. τριπλῶν.
2. τριπλῶν, ἀπο' αὐτῶν
is omitted; Bolt 'em
like meal improperly
added. — but read the*

*{ This is not according
to the Greek.*

*(Anapests.) Why then translate
into Iambics?*

is not in

THE CLOUDS OF

36

Immeasurable Air

Oh! Air, all-powerful Air, which dost enfold

265

This pendant globe, thou vault of flaming gold,

αἰὲρ ἀπείρητος ἢ
ἄβυσσος αἰ.
ἀπείρητος αἰ.

Ye sacred Clouds, who bid the thunder roll,

Rise, appear
sublime

Shine forth, approach, and cheer your suppliant's soul!

STREPSIADES.

πρὶν δὲ τοῦτο
πρὸς τὸν πατέρα, ἴσως
ἴσως.

Hold, keep 'em off awhile, till I am ready.

Ah! luckless me, wou'd I had brought my bonnet,
And so escap'd a soaking.

The An
aph. Arist
are conti
nued in the
original.

SOCRATES.

Come, come away!

Fly swift, ye clouds, and give yourselves to view!

Whether on high Olympus' sacred top

Snow-crown'd ye sit, or in the azure vales

Of your own father Ocean sporting weave

Your misty dance, or dip your golden urns

In the seven mouths of Nile; whether ye dwell

On Thracian Mimas, or Mæotis' lake,

Hear me, yet hear, and thus invok'd approach!

Anap.
Aristoph.

CHORUS OF CLOUDS.

Good verses; but the
Clouds speak of
themselves, & the 2
person. The is in
proper.

Ascend, ye watery Clouds, on high,

Daughters of Ocean, climb the sky,

And o'er the mountain's pine-cap't brow

Towering your fleecy mantle throw:

Thence let us scan the wide-stretch'd scene,

Groves, lawns, and rilling streams between,

And

9 And stormy Neptune's vast expanse,
 And grasp all nature at a glance.
 Now the dark tempest flits away,
 And lo! the glittering orb of day
 Darts forth his clear etherial beam,
 Come let us snatch the joyous gleam.

SOCRATES.

Yes, ye Divinities, whom I adore,
 I hail you now propitious to my prayer.
 29 Did'st thou not hear them speak in thunder to me?

STREPSIADES.

And I too am your Cloudships most obedient
 And under sufferance trump against your thunder:
 Nay, take it how you may, my frights and fears
 Have pinch'd and cholick'd my poor bowels so,
 That I can't chuse but treat your holy nostrils
 With an unfavoury sacrifice.

SOCRATES.

Forbear

These gross scurrilities, for low buffoons
 And mountebanks more fitting. Hush! be still,
 Lift to the chorus of their heavenly voices,
 For music is the language they delight in.

Cumb. not Aristoph.

29 After Socrates has performed his solemn incantation, the Clouds give sign of their approach by thunder, and, that ceasing, they chant their lyric ode in the stile of Archilochus, as they are supposed to be descending towards the earth, and as yet out of sight. The effect of this was probably very striking.

D 3

CHORUS

CHORUS OF CLOUDS.

Ye Clouds, replete with fruitful showers,
 Here let us seek Minerva's towers,
 The cradle of old Cecrops' race,
 The world's chief ornament and grace;
 Here mystic fanes and rites divine
 And lamps in sacred splendor shine;
 Here the Gods dwell in marble domes,
 Feasted with costly hecatombs,
 That round their votive statues blaze,
 Whilst crowded temples ring with praise;
 And pompous sacrifices here
 Make holidays throughout the year,
 And when gay spring-time comes again,
 Bromius convokes his sportive train,
 And pipe and song and choral dance
 Hail the soft hours as they advance.

STREPSIADES.

Now in the name of Jove I pray thee tell me
 Who are these ranting dames, that talk in filts?

315 Of the Amazonian cast no doubt.

SOCRATES.

Not so,
 No dames, but clouds celestial, friendly powers
 To men of sluggish parts; from these we draw
 Sense, apprehension, volubility,
 Wit to confute, and cunning to ensnare.

STREPSIADES.

ARISTOPHANES:

39

STREPSIADES.

Aye, therefore t'was that my heart leapt within me
 For very sympathy when first I heard 'em :
 Now I could prattle shrewdly of first causes,
 320 And spin out metaphysic cobwebs finely,
 And dogmatize most rarely, and dispute
 And paradox it with the best of you :
 So, come what may, I must and will behold 'em ;
 Shew me their faces I conjure you.

*flutter'd in air**εἰ πως ἐστί*

SOCRATES.

Look,

Look towards Mount Parnes as I point—There, there !
 Now they descend the hill ; I see them plainly
As plain can be.

*εὐ
ὄρα*

STREPSIADES.

Where, where? I prythee, shew me.

SOCRATES.

Here ! a whole troop of them thro' woods and hollows,
 A bye-way of their own.

STREPSIADES.

What ails my eyes,
 That I can't catch a glimpse of them ?

SOCRATES.

Behold!

Here at the very entrance—

D 4

STREPSIADES.

THE CLOUDS OF

STREPSIADES.

Never trust me,

If yet I see them clearly.

SOCRATES.

If not now, ^{sure,} Then you must be
You're Sand-blind or worse.

STREPSIADES.

30 Nay, now by ~~father~~-Jove,I cannot chuse but see them—precious creatures!For in good faith here's plenty and to spare.

(Chorus of Clouds enter.)

*πάντα γὰρ
ἔδωκε καὶ ἐχέει*

SOCRATES.

And didst thou doubt if they were goddesses?

STREPSIADES.

Not I, so help me! only I'd a notion

ἐμὴν γὰρ, δρόσον, καὶ πνέον, καὶ σμίον.
Brunch.

That they were fog, and dew, and dusky vapor.

SOCRATES.

For shame! why, man, these are the nursing mothers

30 There is more *play* in this dialogue upon the introduction of the chorus than is generally to be found in the dry and simple conduct of the Greek drama. The magic powers and solemn file of the philosophy, the coarse rusticity and comic credulity of Strepsiades, with the chorus first heard in the air, then after a long and tantalizing expectation, brought personally on the stage as a troop of damsels, habited no doubt in character, and floating *cloud-like* in the dance, whilst the dialogue proceeds explanatory on the part of Socrates, are all contrived with much address, and with great attention to spectacle and stage effect.

Of

Of all our famous sophists, fortune-tellers,
³¹ Quacks, med'cine-mongers, bards bombastical,
 Chorus projectors, star interpreters
 And wonder-making cheats—The gang of idlers,
 Who pay them for their feeding with good store
 Of flattery and mouth worship.

σφαιριστοὺς καὶ
 γαστρονόμους, ἡ
 omitted.

STREPSIADES.

Now I see

Whom we may thank for driving them along
 At such a furious ³² dithyrambic rate,
 Sun-shadowing clouds of many colour'd hues,
 Air-rending tempests, hundred-headed Typhons;
 Now rousing, rattling them about our ears,
 Now gently wafting them adown the sky,
 Moist, airy, bending, bursting into showers;
 For all which fine descriptions the poor knaves
 Dine daintily on scraps.

SOCRATES.

And proper fare;

What better do they merit?

³¹ The groupe Socrates here gives us of *cloud-inspired* worthies has great comic point, it is the reply of sophistry to common sense, which had struck upon the truth in a very natural solution of their properties, supposing them to be *fog* and *vapor*. It is an answer so contrived as to recoil upon himself.

³² This rant is glanced at the dithyrambic writers, and Suidas says it points particularly at Philoxenus, whose compound epithets are here retailed in ridicule of his bombast and turgid diction. The satire is fair, but perhaps the old clown is not strictly the person who should be the vehicle of it.

STREPSIADES.

STREPSIADES.

Under favor,
If these be clouds, (d' you mark me ?) very clouds,
How came they metamorphos'd into women ?
Clouds are not such as these.

SOCRATES.

And what else are they ?

STREPSIADES.

Troth, I can't rightly tell, but I should guess
Something like flakes of wool, not women sure ;
And look ! these dames have noses—

*But yet
αὐλὰς δὲ εἴνας
ἡ ἐχέουσιν*

SOCRATES.

Hark you, friend,
I'll put a question to you.

STREPSIADES.

Out with it !
Be quick ; let's have it.

SOCRATES.

This it is in short—
Hast thou ne'er seen a cloud, which thou cou'd'st fancy
Shap'd like a centaur, leopard, wolf or bull ?

STREPSIADES.

Yea, marry, have I, and what then ?

SOCRATES.

Why then
Clouds can assume what shapes they will, believe me ;
For

For instance; shou'd they spy some hairy clown
Rugged and rough and like ³³ the unlick't cub
Of Xenophantes, strait they turn to centaurs,
And kick at him for vengeance.

STREPSIADES.

Well done, Clouds?
But shou'd they spy that peculating knave,
³⁴ Simon, that public thief, how wou'd they treat him?

SOCRATES.

As wolves—in character most like his own.

STREPSIADES.

Aye, there it is now, when they saw ³⁵ Cleonymus,
That dastard run-away, they turn'd to hinds
In honor of his cowardice.

SOCRATES.

And now,
Having seen ³⁶ Clifthenes, to mock his lewdness
They change themselves to women.

STREPSIADES.

³³ Hieronymus the dithyrambic poet, son of Xenophantes, is here aimed at: The original passage specifies an unnatural vice, which the clouds very appositely mark under the appearance of libidinous centaurs.

³⁴ Simon the sophist is satyriized also by Eupolis for his great and notorious public frauds.

³⁵ Cleonymus had incurred the infamy of throwing away his shield in battle, and betaking himself to flight; the poet marks the affair as recent, and treats it with proportionable severity.

³⁶ Clifthenes was a character so contemptibly effeminate and
vicious

STREPSIADES.

Welcome, ladies !

Imperial ladies, welcome ! An' it please

ἢ εἴτε τι νῦν καὶ
 λω Your Highnesses so far to grace a mortal,
 Give me a touch of your celestial voices.

CHORUS.

Hail, grandfire ! who at this late hour of life

Wou'd'st go to school for cupping, and all hail,

Thou prince pontifical of quirks and quibbles,

Speak thy full mind, make known thy wants and wishes ?

360 Thee and our worthy ³⁷ Prodicus excepted,

Not one of all your sophists have our ear :

Him for his wit and learning we esteem,

Thee for thy proud deportment and high looks,

In barefoot beggary strutting up and down,

Content to suffer mockery for our sake,

And carry a grave face whilst others laugh. *not in do*

vicious withal, that the impurity of his manners became proverbial. We find him in a fragment of Cratinus, and in other passages of our author. In this place he is peculiarly well brought in, and helps Socrates to a very ingenious solution of the question put to him by Strepsiades, how his Clouds came to be metamorphosed into women.

³⁷ A famous sophist, native of Ceos, and a disciple of Protagoras, founder of the title, whose writings were condemned to the flames by decree of the Athenians : The fate of Prodicus was more severe, inasmuch as he was put to death by poison, as a teacher of doctrines which corrupted the youth of Athens. There was something prophetic in thus grouping him with Socrates.

STREPSIADES,

And all the rest is leather & pruned.

ARISTOPHANES.

45

STREPSIADES.

Oh! mother earth, was ever voice like this,
So reverend, so portentous, so divine?

SOCRATES.

These are your only Deities, all else
I flout at. *

*reverend ἱερὸν.
reverend does not suit
the substantiv. Voice.*

STREPSIADES.

Hold! Olympian Jupiter—
Is he no god?

SOCRATES.

³⁸ What Jupiter? what God?

ifle Prythee no more—away with him at once.
cyous

*There is no Jupiter!
οὐδ' ἐστὶ Ζεὺς.*

STREPSIADES.

Say'st thou? who gives us rain? ~~answer~~ me that.

show me that first.

SOCRATES.

These give us rain; as ~~I will~~ ^{thou} ~~frail~~ demonstrate: *fully*:

³⁷⁰ Come on now—When did you e'er see it rain

Without a cloud? If Jupiter gives rain,

The Clouds Νεφέλαι

³⁹ Let him rain down his favors in the sun-shine,

(not in dr.)

Nor ask the clouds to help him.

ταύτας δ' ἀποδραμεῖν.

STREPSIADES.

³⁸ Here is a strong assertion grafted on the character of Socrates, but the levity it is introduced with, and the ridiculous comments Strepsiades makes upon it, argue no peculiar malice in the intention.

*The accusation
which occasioned
his death, was
grounded on this
assertion.*

³⁹ The scholiast in his note upon this passage, gives us an allusion to a story of a certain Myscelus, who upon consulting the oracle,

STREPSIADES.

You have hit it,
 'Tis so; Heav'n help me, I did think till now,
 When t'was his godship's pleasure, he made water
 Into a sieve and gave the earth a shower.
 But, hark'ye me, who thunders? tell me that;
 For then it is I tremble.

SOCRATES.

roll'd round. These, these thunder,
 When they are tumbled.

STREPSIADES.

How, blasphemmer, how?

SOCRATES.

When they are charg'd with vapors full to th' bursting,
 And bandied to and fro against each other,
 Then with the shock they burst and crack amain.

STREPSIADES.

And who is he that jowls them thus together
 But Jove himself?

SOCRATES.

Jove! tis not Jove that does it,
 * But the ætherial vortex.

STREPSIADES.

oracle, was directed to found a city in that very spot, where he should be caught in a shower whilst the sky was clear. Despairing of an event so unnatural, he had the address to interpret the tears of his mistress as the fulfilment of the oracle, and proceeded to complete his project accordingly.

* The *ætherial vortex*, 'αἰθέριος δῖνος, is referable to the philosopher

STREPSIADES.

What is he?

I never heard of him; is he not Jove?
 Or is Jove put aside and Vortex crown'd
 King of Olympus in his state and place?
 But let me learn some more of this same thunder.

SOCRATES.

Have you not learnt? I told you how the clouds,
 Being furcharg'd with vapour, rush together
 And in the conflict shake the poles with thunder.

STREPSIADES.

But who believes you?

SOCRATES.

You, as I shall prove it:

Mark the Panathenæa, where you cram
 Your belly full of pottage; if you shake
 And stir it lustily about—what then?

STREPSIADES.

Marry, why then it gives a desperate crack;
 It bounces like a thunderbolt, the pottage
 Keeps such a coil within me—At the first

sopher Anaxagoras, and it is a general remark, which the reader should bear in mind, that all the satire bestowed upon the character of Socrates in this comedy is not pointed personally, but through his vehicle at various sophists and philosophers, as they fall in the poet's way: Socrates was known to direct all his studies to morality, and to rescue his philosophy from abstruse researches, as Cicero testifies.

Euge! bene! recte! Pappas

Pappax it cries—anon with double force,
Papappax !—when at length *Papapappax*
 From forth my sounding entrails thund'ring bursts.

SOCRATES.

Think then, if so your belly trumpets forth,
 How must the vasty vault of Heaven resound,
 When the clouds crack with thunder.

STREPSIADES.

Let that pass,
 And tell me of the light'ning, whose quick flash
 Burns us to cinders ; that at least great Jove
 Keeps in reserve to launch at perjury.

SOCRATES.

Dunce, dotard ! was you born before the flood
 * To talk of perjury, whilst Simon breathes,
 Theorus and Cleonymus, whilst they,
 Thrice perjurd villains, brave the lightning's stroke,
 And gaze the Heav'ns unscorcht ? Wou'd these escape ?
 Why, man, Jove's random fires strike his own fane,
 Strike Sunium's guiltless top, strike the dumb oak,
 Who never yet broke faith or falsely swore.

STREPSIADES.

It may be so, good sooth ! You talk this well,
 But I wou'd fain be taught the natural cause
 Of these appearances.

* Lucretius has dilated this thought into two very fine passages,
 in his sixth book, v. 386,—v. 416.

SOCRATES.

SOCRATES.

Mark when the winds,
In their free courses check'd, are pent and purs'd
As 'twere within a bladder, stretching then
And struggling for expansion, they burst forth
With crack so fierce as sets the air on fire.

STREPSIADES.

The devil they do ! why now the murder's out :
So was I serv'd with a damn'd paunch, I broil'd
On Jove's day last, just such a scurvy trick ;
Because forsooth, not dreaming of your thunder,
I never thought to give the rascal vent,
Bounce ! goes the bag, and covers me all over
With filth and ordure till my eyes struck fire.

4¹ CHORUS.

The envy of all Athens shalt thou be,
Happy old man, who from our lips dost suck
Into thine ears true wisdom, so thou art
But wise to learn, and studious to retain
What thou hast learnt, patient to bear the blows
And buffets of hard fortune, to persist
Doing or suffering, firmly to abide
Hunger and cold, not craving where to dine,
To drink, to sport and trifle time away,
But holding that for best, which best becomes

4¹ This speech, which in the common editions is given to Socrates, is very properly restored by Brunck to the chorus.

E

A man

A man who means to carry all things through
Neatly, expertly, perfect at all points
With head, hands, tongue, to force his way to fortune.

STREPSIADES.

Be confident ; I give myself for one
Of a tough heart, watchful as care can make me,
A frugal, pinching fellow, that can sup
Upon a sprig of favery and to bed ;
I am your man for this, hard as an anvil.

SOCRATES.

'Tis well, so you will ratify your faith
In these our deities—chaos and clouds
And speech—to these and only these adhere.

STREPSIADES.

If from this hour henceforth I ever waste
A single thought on any other gods,
Or give them sacrifice, libation, incense,
Nay, even common courtesy, renounce me.

CHORUS.

Speak your wish boldly then, so shall you prosper
As you obey and worship us, and study
The wholesome art of thriving.

STREPSIADES.

Gracious ladies,
I ask no mighty favour, simply this—
Let me but distance every tongue in Greece,
And run 'em out of sight a hundred lengths.

CHORUS.

ARISTOPHANES.

30

CHORUS.

Is that all? there we are your friends to serve you:
We will endow thee with such powers of speech,
As henceforth not a demagogue in Athens
Shall spout such popular harangues as thou shalt.

STREPSIADES.

A fig for powers of spouting! give me powers
Of nonsuited my creditors.

CHORUS.

A trifle—

Granted as soon as ask'd; only be bold,
And shew yourself obedient to your teachers.

STREPSIADES.

With your help so I will, being undone;
Stript of my pelf by these high blooded cattle,
And a fine dame, the torment of my life.
⁴² Now let them work their wicked will upon me;
They're welcome to my carcase; let 'em claw it,
Starve it with thirst and hunger, fry it, freeze it,
Nay, flay the very skin off; 'tis their own;
So that I may but fob my creditors,
Let the world talk, I care not tho' it call me
A bold fac'd, loud tongued, over bearing bully;
A shameless, vile, prevaricating cheat;
A tricking, quibbling, double dealing knave;

⁴² Here some of the old editions make Socrates and the Chorus leave the stage, and throw the remainder of this speech into soliloquy.

A prating, pettyfogging limb o' th' law;
 A fly old fox, a perjurer, a hang dog,
 A raggamuffin made of shreds and patches,
 The leavings of a dunghill—Let 'em rail,
 Yea, marry, let 'em turn my guts to fiddle-strings,
⁴³ May my bread be my poison! if I care.

CHORUS.

This fellow hath a prompt and daring spirit—
 Come hither, Sir; do you perceive and feel
 What great and glorious fame you shall acquire
 By this our schooling of you?

STREPSIADES.

What, I pray you?

CHORUS.

What but to live the envy of mankind
 Under our patronage?

STREPSIADES.

When shall I see

Those halcyon days?

⁴³ This torrent of terms, nearly if not quite synonymous, forms one of the most curious passages in this very singular author, and is such a specimen of the versatility and variety of the language, as almost defies translation. They are anapaests in the original, and have been ignorantly thrown into soliloquy, which is properly corrected in Brunck's edition, for which there is not only the authority of the best MSS, but internal evidence of the strongest sort. I have struggled with the difficulty to the best of my power, and if the learned reader will take the trouble to compare my effort with the original, I flatter myself he will not think I have been unfaithful or unfortunate in the attempt.

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

Then shall your doors be throng'd
With clients waiting for your coming forth,
All eager to consult you, pressing all
To catch a word from you, with abstracts, briefs,
And cases ready drawn for your opinion.
But come, begin and lecture this old fellow ;
Sift him, that we may see what meal he's made of.

SOCRATES.

Hark'ye, let's hear what principles you hold,
That these being known, I may apply such tools
As tally with your stuff.

STREPSIADES.

Tools ! by the gods ;
Are you about to spring a mine upon me ?

SOCRATES.

Not so, but simply in the way of practice
To try your memory.

STREPSIADES.

Oh ! as for that,
My memory is of two sorts, long and short :
With them, who owe me aught, it never fails ;
My creditors indeed complain of it,
As mainly apt to leak and lose it's reck'ning.

SOCRATES.

But let us hear if nature hath endow'd you
With any grace of speaking.

STREPSIADES.

None of speaking,
But a most apt propensity to cheating.

SOCRATES.

If this be all, how can you hope to learn ?

STREPSIADES.

Fear me not, never break your head for that.

SOCRATES.

Well then, be quick, and when I speak of things
Mysterious and profound, see that you make
No boggling, but—

STREPSIADES.

I understand your meaning ;
You'd have me bolt philosophy by mouthfuls,
“ Just like a hungry cur.

SOCRATES.

Oh ! brutal, gross,
And barbarous ignorance ! I much suspect,
Old as thou art, thou must be taught with stripes :
Tell me now, when thou'rt beaten, what dost feel ?

STREPSIADES.

The blows of him that beats me I do feel ;
But having breath'd awhile I lay my action
And cite my witnesses ; anon more cool,

“ He glances at the Cynic philosophers.

I bring

I bring my cause into the court, and sue
For damages.

SOCRATES.

Strip off your cloak ! prepare.

STREPSIADES.

Prepare for what ? what crime have I committed ?

SOCRATES.

None ; but the rule and custom is with us,
That all shall enter naked.

STREPSIADES.

And why naked ?

I come with no search warrant ; fear me not ;
I'll carry nought away with me.

SOCRATES.

No matter ;

⁴⁵ Conform yourself, and strip.

⁴⁵ The humour of this, and every other dialogue between these characters, consists in the clown's continual misconstruction of the philosopher's meaning. The poet, who seems to hold all the superstitious ceremonies of the heathen religion in contempt, makes Socrates insist upon Strepsiades stripping himself naked before he can be admitted of his school, because such was the practice with those, who were initiated into the *sacred mysteries*. The clown, who does not see the drift of this injunction, excuses himself from obeying it, by saying, he does not come like those, who are sent upon the search for stolen goods, and who by law were obliged to enter all such houses naked, and so to go out of them, that their warrant might not be made a pretence for plundering the owners.

STREPSIADES.

And if I do,

Tell me for my encouragement to which
Of all your scholars will you liken me?

SOCRATES.

You shall be call'd a second Chærephon.

STREPSIADES.

Ah ! Chærephon is but another name
For a dead corpse—excuse me.

SOCRATES.

No more words :

Pluck up your courage ; answer not, but follow :
Haste and be perfected.

STREPSIADES.

⁴⁶ Give me my dole

Of honey-cake in hand, and pass me on ;
Ne'er trust me if I do not quake and tremble
As if the cavern of Trophonius yawn'd,
And I were stepping in.

SOCRATES.

What ails you ? enter !

⁴⁶ Strepsiades, though seemingly unconscious of the allusions to the sacred mysteries, is perfectly well versed in the ceremonials of Trophonius's cave, and asks for the honey cake, which is an indispensable oblation to the prophetic dragon under ground. The circumstance of stripping naked applies equally to the candidate for admission to the cave, as well as to the mysteries, properly so called.

Why

Why do you halt and loiter at the door?

(*Exeunt Socrates and Strepsiades.*)

CHORUS.

Go, brave adventurer, proceed!
 May fortune crown the gallant deed;
 Tho' far advanc'd in life's last stage,
 Spurning the infirmities of age,
 Thou can'st to youthful labours rise,
 And boldly struggle to be wise.

47 Ye, who are here spectators of our scene,

47 This address, it is presumed, was spoken by the Chorus on the part of the author, and probably by one wearing his mask. I think it is easy to understand his motives for the introduction of it here, whilst the action of the comedy is suspended, and in this stage of it's progress rather than as a prologue before the opening of the play, when the minds of the audience might have been less favourably disposed to receive it. Depending upon the interest, which the preceding scenes would naturally create, he now ventures gently to expostulate with them upon the hard treatment his former comedy of the Clouds had met with, vindicating that performance, yet artfully charging it's miscarriage upon a cabal, whose ignorance and injustice they had no share in. This is curious, as far as it gives us an insight into the mind and feelings of the poet, where we can at once discover a high sense and understanding of his own merit, and a keen resentment of the indignity he had suffered by what he calls a faction, from which however he exculpates his present audience, only because he fears to provoke them to a similar opposition, and finds it necessary to sooth them into good humour, fully evincing by the compliments he pays them, how doubtfully he thought of his own situation, and of their disposition to support him in his present undertaking.

Give

Give me your patience to a few plain words,
 And by my patron Bacchus, whose I am,
 I swear they shall be true ones—Gentle friends,
 So may I prosper in your fair esteem,
 As I declare in truth that I was mov'd
 To tender you my former comedy,
 As deeming it the best of all my works,
 And you it's judges worthy of that work,
 Which I had wrought with my best care and pains;
 But fools were found to thrust me from the stage,
 And you, whose better wisdom should have fav'd me
 From that most vile cabal, permitted it;
 For which I needs must chide, yet not so sharply
 As to break off from such approv'd good friends;
 No, you have been my patrons from all time,
 Ev'n to my first born issue: when I dropt
 My bantling at your door to hide the shame
 Of one, who call'd herself a maiden muse,
 You charitably took the foundling in,
 And gave it worthy training. Now, behold,
 This sister comedy, Electra like,
 Comes on the search if she perchance may find
 Some recognition of her brother lost,
 Tho' but a relick of his well known hair.
 Seemly and modest she appears before you;
 Not like our stage buffoons in shaggy hide
 To set the mob a roaring; she will vent

No

No foolish jests at ⁴⁸ baldness, will not dance
 The sottish ⁴⁹ cordax; we have no old man
 Arm'd with a staff to practise manual jokes
 On the by-standers ribs, and keep the ring
 For them who dance the chorus: you shall see
 No ⁵⁰ howling furies burst upon the stage
 Waving their fiery torches; other weapons
 Than the muse gives us we shall not employ,
 Nor let ⁵¹ Ah me, ah me! sigh in your ears.
 Yet not of this I boast, nor that I scorn
 To cater for your palates out of scraps
 At second or third hand, but fresh and fair
 And still original, as one, who knows
 When he has done a good deed where to stop,
 And having levell'd ⁵² Cleo to the ground,

⁴⁸ This is a retort upon Eupolis, who had taken occasion to ridicule Aristophanes for so poor a reason as his being bald headed. I need not remind the reader that the *Electra*-like points at Æschylus.

⁴⁹ The cordax was a comic dance of a gross and indecent character, in which the performers counterfeited drunkenness. It became proverbial, and is alluded to by a variety of authors; see *Meursius in Orchestra*.

⁵⁰ Æschylus was mulct in a heavy fine for introducing his chorus of furies armed with fiery torches.

⁵¹ He says (glancing at the hypochondriac philosophers) that he will not weary his audience with the mournful repetitions of 'ah, 'ah! Yet with these very words Strepsiades opens the very play we are upon.

⁵² Cleo's death took place in the year following.

Not

Not to insult his carcase, like to those
 Who having once run down Hyperbolus,
 Poor devil ! mouth and mangle without mercy
 Him and his mother too ; foremost of these
 Was Eupolis, who pilfer'd from my muse,
 And pass'd it for his own with a new name,
 Guilty the more for having dash'd his theft
 With the obscene device of an old hag
 Dancing the drunken cordax in her cups,
 Like her Phrynichus feign'd to be devour'd
 By the sea-monster—Shame upon such scenes !
 Hermippus next *Hyperboliz'd* amain,
 And now the whole pack open in full cry,
 Holding the game in chace, which I had rous'd.
⁵⁵ If there be any here, who laugh with these,
 Let such not smile with me ; but if this night
 Ye crown these scenes with merited applause,
 Posterity shall justify your taste.

⁵⁵ It is curious, though not pleasing, to observe with what acrimony these contemporary wits pursue each other, and it is not unnatural to conclude, that wherever the practice shall obtain, as at Athens, of reviewing the dramatic productions of the year, and adjudging the prize of fame to one above all the rest, the consequences must ever be such, or nearly such, as we now contemplate. Those adjudications, we have authority to believe, were in many cases partial, or at least injudicious, and even at best they could not but be attended with murmurs and remonstrances, nor fail to aggravate the animosity and enflame the envious spirits of rival authors, high in their own conceit, and keenly jealous of each other's success.

SEMICHORUS.

SEMICHORUS.

Great Jove, supreme of gods, and heav'n's high king,
 First I invoke; ⁵⁴ next him the trident's lord,
 Whose mighty stroke smites the wild waves asunder,
 And makes the firm earth tremble; thee, from whom
 We draw our being, all inspiring Air,
 Parent of nature; and thee, radiant Sun,
 Thron'd in thy flaming chariot, I invoke,
 Dear to the gods and by the world ador'd.

CHORUS OF CLOUDS.

Most grave and sapient judges, hear the charge,
 Which we shall now prefer, of slights ill brook'd
 By us your wrong'd appellants: for whilst we,
 The patronesses of your state, the Clouds,
 Of all the powers celestial serve you most,
 You graceless mortals serve us not at all;
 Nor smoke, nor sacrifice ascends from you,
 But blank ingratitude and cold neglect.
 If some rash enterprize you set on foot,
 Some brainless project, strait with rain or thunder,
 Sure warnings, we apprize you of your folly:
 When late you made that offspring of a tanner,
 That Paphlagonian odious to the gods,
 The general of your armies, mark how fierce

⁵⁴ He follows the Homeric order in addressing Neptune next to Jupiter; and in his attributes seems to have the Prometheus of Æschylus in his eye.

We

We scowl'd upon you, and indignant roll'd
 Our thunders intermixt with flashing fires;
 The Moon forsook her course, and the vext Sun
 Quench'd his bright torch, disdaining to behold
 Cleo your chief, yet chief that Cleo was;
 For it should seem a proverb with your people,
 That measures badly taken best succeed:
 But if you'll learn of us the ready mode
 'T'o cancel your past errors, and ensure
 Fame and good fortune for the public weal,
 You have nought else to do,⁵⁵ but stop the swallow
 Of that wide gaping cormorant, that thief
 Convicted and avow'd, with a neat noose
 Drawn tight and fitted to his scurvy throat.

SEMICHORUS.

'Thou too, Apollo, of thy native isle,
 Upon the Cinthian mount high thron'd, the king;
 Hear and be present! thou, Ephesian goddess,
 Whose golden shrine the Lydian damsels serve
 With rich and costly worship; thou, Minerva,
 Arm'd with the dreadful ægis, virgin queen,

⁵⁵ In this period of the Greek comedy, these appeals to the theatre had a kind of Saturnalian privilege for personalities of the coarsest sort. It does not appear that Cleo's public character deserved these invectives, though his private one was far from amiable. The account of his public services will be found in Thucydides, lib. iv. and he died in battle; but Aristophanes bore him an inveterate grudge for opposing him in the matter of his naturalization.

And

And patroness of Athens ; thou, who hold'st
 Divided empire on Parnassus' heights,
 Lead hither thy gay train of revellers,
 Convivial god, and thus invoc'd approach !

CHORUS.

As we were hither journeying in midway
 We crost upon the Moon, who for a while
 Held us in converse, and with courteous greeting
 To this assembly charg'd us—This premis'd,
 The tenor of our next instruction points
 To anger and complaint for ill returns
 On your part to good offices on her's.
 First, for the loan of her bright silver lamp
 So long held out to you, by which you've sav'd
 Your torch and lacquey for this many a night.
 More she could name, if benefits avail'd ;
 But you have lost all reck'ning of your feasts,
 And turn'd your calendar quite topsy-turvey ;
 So that the deities, who find themselves
 Bilk'd of their dues, and supperless for lack
 Of their accustom'd sacrifices, rail
 At her, poor Moon, and vent their hungry spite,
 As she were in the fault ; whilst you, forsooth,
 Maliciously select our gala days,
 When feasting would be welcome, for your suits
 And criminal indictments ; ⁵⁶ but when we

Keep

⁵⁶ When the poet, who is here speaking in his own person, indulges himself in such a vein of daring ridicule, it would be hard

Keep fast and put on mourning for the loss
 Of Memnon or Sarpedon, sons of Heaven,
 Then, then you mock us with the savoury odour
 Of smoking dainties, which we may not taste:
 Therefore it is, that when this year ye sent
 Your deputy Amphictyon to the diet,
 (Hyperbolus forsooth) in just revenge
 We tore away his crown, and drove him back
 To warn you how you slight the Moon again.

SOCRATES, STREPSIADES, CHORUS.

SOCRATES.

“O vivifying breath, ethereal air,

to suppose that he was seriously employed to fix the charge of impiety upon Socrates, for the purpose of bringing him to trial. That he was guiltless of this cruel intention, stronger internal evidence cannot be adduced than what this Chorus affords; and there must be a wondrous want of reverence for the gods amongst the people at large, or an unbounded privilege of lampooning them on the stage, when such passages as this could pass with impunity. As for the seemingly serious invocations of the Semichorus, them I regard as mere parodies upon the tragic poets, who carried them to excess; and it was only because Socrates was known to hold the licentiousness of the comic poets in contempt, that they were provoked to retort that contempt upon him and his doctrines.

⁵⁷ This is one of the passages where Aristophanes is charged with having paved the way for Anytus and Melitus in their attack upon Socrates; but referring to what we have repeatedly offered upon this subject, we leave it with the reader. The circumstance of the vermin, which annoy Strepsiades in his pallet, is ridicule of no very cleanly species, yet the affected poverty of his bit, which many of the sophists put on, and their loathsome neglect of their persons, merited contempt and reproof.

And

And thou profoundest chaos, witness for me
 If ever wretch was seen so gross and dull,
 So stupid and perplext as this old clown,
 Whose shallow intellect can entertain
 No image nor impression of a thought ;
 But ere you've told it, it is lost and gone.
 'Tis time however he should now come forth
 In the broad day—What ho ! Strepsiades—
 'Take up your pallet ; bring yourself and it
 Into the light.

STREPSIADES.

Yes, if the bugs would let me.

SOCRATES.

Quick, quick, I say ; set down your load and listen !

STREPSIADES.

Lo ! here am I.

SOCRATES.

Come, tell me what it is
 That you would learn besides what I have taught you ;
 Is it of measure, verse, or modulation ?

STREPSIADES.

Of measure by all means, for I was fobb'd
 Of two days dole i' th' measure of my meal
 By a damn'd knavish huckster.

SOCRATES.

Pish ! who talks
 Of meal ? I ask which metre you prefer,
 Tetrametre or trimetre.

F

STREPSIADES.

STREPSIADES.

I answer—

Give me a pint pot.

SOCRATES.

Yes, but that's no answer.

STREPSIADES.

No answer! stake your money, and I'll wager
That your tetrametre is half my pint pot.

SOCRATES.

Go to the gallows, clodpate, with your pint pot!
Will nothing stick to you? But come, perhaps
We may try further and fare better with you—
Suppose I spoke to you of modulation;
Will you be taught of that?

STREPSIADES.

Tell me first,

Will I be profited? will I be paid
The meal that I was chous'd of? tell me that.

SOCRATES.

You will be profited by being taught

⁵⁸ There was a certain measure, as near as possible to our pint, which the Greeks dealt out daily of meal to their slaves. To this Strepsiades alludes when he says he was defrauded of two measures, and to this humorous mal-entendu he obstinately adheres through the whole scene, playing upon the pedantry of the philosopher by contrasting it with the rusticity of the clown, which, though difficult to translate into modern language, is surely a scene in the best style of the author.

To

To bear your part at table in some sort
 After a decent fashion; you will learn
 Which verse is most commensurate and fit
 To the arm'd chorus in the dance of war,
 And which with most harmonious cadence guides
 The dactyl in his course poetical.

STREPSIADES.

The dactyl, quotha! Sure I know that well.

SOCRATES.

As how? discuss.

STREPSIADES.

Here, at my fingers end;
 This is my dactyl, and has been my dactyl
 Since I could count my fingers.

SOCRATES.

Oh! the dolt.

STREPSIADES.

⁵⁹ I wish to be no wiser in these matters.

SOCRATES.

What then?

STREPSIADES.

Why then, teach me no other art
 But the fine art of cozening.

⁵⁹ This is an excellent answer on the part of common sense to all such unprofitable and pedantic trifling. It is not easy to conceive how the wit of man could devise means of exhibiting the character of a sophist in a more ludicrous light, than is done throughout the whole of this very extraordinary drama.

SOCRATES.

Granted; still

There is some previous matter, as for instance

“The genders male and female—Can you name them?”

STREPSIADES.

I were a fool else—These are masculine;

Ram, bull, goat, dog, and pullet.

SOCRATES.

There you're out:

Pullet is male and female.

STREPSIADES.

Tell me how?

SOCRATES.

Cock and hen pullet—So they should be nam'd.

STREPSIADES.

And so they should, by the ætherial air!

You've hit it; for which rare discovery,

Take all the meal this cardopus contains.

SOCRATES.

Why there again you sin against the genders,

60 If this same art of cozening was little else but that of quibbling upon words, the philosopher is not without reason made to lecture his pupil upon the genders of nouns; and as the meanest evasion language will admit of is that species of quibbling to which this lecture leads, severer ridicule could not be employed against the person it affects; whether it was well or ill founded we do not say, but, be that as it may, take it as a specimen of comic contrast, and perhaps no two characters were ever presented on the stage more humorously or more ingeniously opposed.

To

To call your bolting tub a cardopus,
Making that masculine which should be fem'ine.

STREPSIADES.

How do I make my bolting tub a male ?

SOCRATES.

Did you not call it cardopus ? As well
You might have call'd Cleonymus a man ;
He and your bolting-tub alike belong
To t'other sex, believe me.

STREPSIADES.

Well, my trough
Shall be a Cardopa and he Cleonyma ;
Will that content you ?

SOCRATES.

Yes, and while you live
Learn to distinguish sex in proper names.

STREPSIADES.

I do ; the female I am perfect in.

SOCRATES.

Give me the proof.

STREPSIADES.

Lyfilla, she's a female ;
Philinna, and Demetria, and Clitagora.

SOCRATES.

Now name your males.

F 3

STREPSIADES.

STREPSIADES.

A thousand—as for instance,
Philoxenus, Melesias, and Amynias.

SOCRATES.

Call you these masculine, egregious dunce?

STREPSIADES.

Are they not such with you?

SOCRATES.

No; put the case,
You and Amynias meet—how will you greet him?

STREPSIADES.

Why, thus for instance—Hip! holla! Aminia!

SOCRATES.

There, there! you make a wench of him at once.

STREPSIADES.

And fit it is for one who shuns the field;
A coward ought not to be call'd a man;
Why teach me what is known to all the world?

SOCRATES.

Aye, why indeed?—but come, repose yourself.

STREPSIADES.

Why so?

⁶¹ This Amynias seems to have had his full share of abuse from the comic poets of his time: Eupolis, Crates, and our author, in various parts, bestow it very plentifully.

SOCRATES.

ARISTOPHANES.

71

SOCRATES.

For meditation's sake : lie down.

STREPSIADES.

Not on this lousy pallet I beseech you ;
But if I must lie down, let me repose
On the bare earth and meditate.

SOCRATES.

Away !

There's nothing but this bed will cherish thought.

STREPSIADES.

It cherishes, alas ! a host of bugs,
That shew no mercy on me.

SOCRATES.

Come, begin,

Cudgel your brains and turn yourself about ;
Now ruminate awhile, and if you start
A thought that puzzles you, try t'other side
And turn to something else, but not to sleep ;
Suffer not sleep to close your eyes one moment.

STREPSIADES.

Ah ! woe is me ; ah, woeful, well-a-day !

SOCRATES.

What ails you ? why this moaning ?

STREPSIADES.

I am lost ;

I've rous'd the natives from their hiding holes ;

F 4

A colony

A colony of bugs in ambuscade
Have fall'n upon me ; belly, back and ribs,
No part is free : I feed a commonwealth.

SOCRATES.

Take not your sufferings too much to heart

STREPSIADES.

How can I chuse—a wretch made up of wants !
Here am I penniless and spiritless,
Without a skin, Heav'n knows, without a shoe ;
And to complete my miseries here I lie
Like a starv'd centinel upon his post
At watch and ward, till I am shrunk to nothing.

SOCRATES.

How now ; how fare you ? Have you sprung a thought ?

STREPSIADES.

Yes, yes, so help me Neptune !

SOCRATES.

Hah ! what is it ?

STREPSIADES.

Why I am thinking if these cursed vermin
Will leave one fragment of my carcase free.

SOCRATES.

A plague confound you !

STREPSIADES.

Spare yourself that prayer ;
I'm plagu'd already to your heart's content. |

SOCRATES.

Prythee don't be so tender of your skin;
Tuck yourself up and buff it like a man:
Keep your scull under cover, and depend on't
'T will make your brain bring forth some precious project
For farthering your good fortune at the expence
Of little else but honesty and justice.

STREPSIADES.

Ah! would to Heav'n some friendly soul would help me
To a fine project how to cheat the bugs
With a sleek lambskin.

SOCRATES.

Whereabouts, I trow,
Sits the wind now? What ails you? are you dozing?

STREPSIADES.

Not I, by Heaven!

SOCRATES.

Can you start nothing yet?

STREPSIADES.

Nothing, so help me.

SOCRATES.

Will your head breed no project,
Tho' nurs'd so daintily?

STREPSIADES.

What should it breed?
Tell me, sweet Socrates; give me some hint.

SOCRATES.

SOCRATES.

Say first what 'tis you wish.

STREPSIADES.

A thousand times,
Ten thousand times I've said it o'er and o'er—
My creditors, my creditors—'Tis them
I would fain bilk.

SOCRATES.

Go to! get under cover,
Keep your head warm, and rarify your wits
Till they shall sprout into some fine conceit,
Some scheme of happy promise: sift it well,
Divide, abstract, compound, and when 'tis ready,
Out with it boldly.

STREPSIADES.

Miserable me!
Would I were out!

SOCRATES.

⁶² Lie still, and if you strike
Upon a thought that baffles you, break off

⁶² This incident of the truckle bed, and all Socrates's instructions for soliciting the inspiration of some sudden thought, are a banter upon the pretended visions and communications with dæmons of the sophists and philosophers; tricks brought by them out of Egypt and the East, which served to impose upon the credulous and vulgar.

From that intanglement and try another,
So shall your wits be fresh to start again.

STREPSIADES.

Hah ! my dear boy !—My precious Socrates !

SOCRATES.

What would'st thou, gaffer ?

STREPSIADES.

I have sprung a thought,
A plot upon my creditors.

SOCRATES.

Discuss !

STREPSIADES.

Answer me this—Suppose that I should hire
A witch, who some fair night shall raise a spell,
Whereby I'll snap the moon from out her sphere
And bag her—

SOCRATES.

What to do !

STREPSIADES.

To hold her fast,
And never let her run her courses more ;
So shall I scape my creditors.

SOCRATES.

How so ?

STREPSIADES.

STREPSIADES.

Because the calculations of their usury
Are made from month to month.

SOCRATES.

A gallant scheme;
And yet methinks I could suggest a hint
As practicable and no less ingenious—
Suppose you are arrested for a debt,
We'll say five talents, how will you contrive
To cancel at a stroke both debt and writ?

STREPSIADES.

Gramercy! I can't tell you how off hand;
It needs some cogitation.

SOCRATES.

Were you apt,
Such cogitations would not be to seek;
They would be present at your fingers ends,
Buzzing alive, like chafers in a string,
Ready to slip and fly.

STREPSIADES.

I've hit the nail
That does the deed, and so you will confess.

SOCRATES.

Out with it then!

STREPSIADES.

Good chance but you have noted

A pretty

ARISTOPHANES.

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A pretty toy, a trinket in the shops,
Which being rightly held produceth fire
From things combustible—

SOCRATES.

A burning glass,
Vulgarly call'd—

STREPSIADES.

You are right; 'tis so.

SOCRATES.

Proceed!

STREPSIADES.

Put the case now your whoreson bailiff comes,
Shews me his writ—I, standing thus, d'ye mark me,
In the sun's stream, measuring my distance, guide
My focus to a point upon his writ,
And off it goes in fume.

SOCRATES.

By the Graces!

'Tis wittingly devis'd.

STREPSIADES.

The very thought
Of his five talents cancell'd at a stroke
Makes my heart dance for joy.

SOCRATES.

But now again—

STREPSIADES.

STREPSIADES.

What next?

SOCRATES.

Suppose yourself at bar, surpriz'd
 Into a suit, no witnesses at hand,
 The judge prepar'd to pass decree against you—
 How will you parry that?

STREPSIADES.

As quick as thought—

SOCRATES.

But how?

STREPSIADES.

Incontinently hang myself,
 And baulk the suitor—

SOCRATES.

Come, you do but jest.

STREPSIADES.

Serious, by all the gods! A man that's dead
 Is out of the law's reach.

SOCRATES.

I've done with you—
 Instruction's lost upon you; your vile jests
 Put me beyond all patience.

STREPSIADES.

Nay, but tell me
 What is it, my good fellow, that offends thee?

SOCRATES.

SOCRATES.

Your execrable lack of memory.

Why how now; what was the first rule I taught you?

STREPSIADES.

Say'st thou the first? the very first—what was it?

Why, let me see; 'twas something, was it not?

About the meal—Out on it! I have lost it.

SOCRATES.

Oh thou incorrigible, old doating blockhead,
Can hanging be too bad for thee!

STREPSIADES.

Why there now!

Was ever man so us'd? If I can't make

My tongue keep pace with your's, teach it the quirks

And quibbles of your sophistry at once,

I may go hang—I am a fool forsooth—

Where shall I turn.⁶³ Oh gracious Clouds, befriend me,
Give me some counsel.

⁶³ This apostrophe to the Chorus, for which the old man is prepared by the reproaches of Socrates, is very artfully introduced. It not only gives them a timely interest in the scene, and breaks the long silence they had kept, but produces a new incident in the drama, on which the catastrophe is made to turn. It is also perfectly fit, that the thought of sending the son to Socrates in place of the father should be suggested by the Chorus, and not spring from either of the persons present on the scene.

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

This it is, old man—
If that your son at home is apt and docile,
Depute him in your stead, and send him hither.

STREPSIADES.

My son is well endow'd with nature's gifts,
But obstinately bent against instruction.

CHORUS.

And do you suffer it?

STREPSIADES.

What can I do?
He's a fine full grown youth, a dashing fellow,
And by the mother's side of noble blood:
I'll feel my way with him—but if he kicks,
Befall what may, nothing shall hinder me
But I will kick him headlong out of doors,
And let him graze ev'n where he will for me—
Wait only my return; I'll soon dispatch. (*Exit.*)

CHORUS.

“ Highly favour'd shalt thou be,
“ With gifts and graces kept in store
“ For those who our divinities adore,
“ And to no other altars bend the knee:
“ And well we know th' obedience shewn
“ By this old clown deriv'd alone
“ From lessons taught by thee.

* Wherefore

ARISTOPHANES.

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" Wherefore to swell thy lawful gains,
 " Thou soon shalt skin this silly cur,
 " Whom thou hast put in such a stir,
 " And take his plunder for thy pains :
 " For mark how often dupes like him devise
 " " Projects that only serve t' enrich the wise."

STREPSIADES, PHIDIPPIDES.

STREPSIADES.

Out of my house ! I call the Clouds to witness
 You shall not set a foot within my doors.
 Go to your Lord Megacles ! Get you hence,
 And gnaw his posts for hunger.

PHIDIPPIDES.

Ah, poor man !

I see how it is with you. You are mad,
 Stark mad, by Jupiter !

⁶⁴ Such of the editions, as have arranged this comedy into acts, make the second to conclude in this place. The ridiculous lucubrations of Strepsiades in the philosopher's truckle bed, with his scheme of the witch and the burning glass, which form the humour of the foregoing scene, had doubtless some temporary points of personality, which we are now at a loss to trace; further than in the project for arresting the moon, where he seems to glance at Pythagoras. The *Clouds*, in this comedy, are not merely those insipid, episodical personages, which only seem to interrupt and encumber the drama, but take an important part in the business of the scene, and put in motion the chief incidents of the plot.

G

STREPSIADES.

STREPSIADES.

You swear by Jupiter!

Why then I swear by Jove there's no such god—
Now who is mad but you?

PHIDIPPIDES.

Why do you turn
Such solemn truths to ridicule!

STREPSIADES.

I laugh

To hear a child prate of such old men's fables;
But list to what I'll tell you, learn of me,
And from a child you shall become a man—
But keep the secret close, do you mark me, close;
Beware of babbling—

PHIDIPPIDES.

Heyday! what is coming?

STREPSIADES.

You swore but now by Jupiter—

PHIDIPPIDES.

I did.

STREPSIADES.

Mark now what 'tis to have a friend like me—
I tell you at a word there is no Jupiter.

PHIDIPPIDES.

How then?

STREPSIADES.

STREPSIADES.

He's off: I tell it you for truth;
He's out of place, and Vortex reigns in stead.

PHIDIPPIDES.

Vortex indeed! What freak has caught you now?

STREPSIADES.

No freak, 'tis fact.

PHIDIPPIDES.

Who tells you this?

STREPSIADES.

Who tells me?

Who but that ⁶⁵ Melian atheist Socrates,
And Chærephon, the flea philosopher?

PHIDIPPIDES.

Are you so far gone in your dotage, fir,
As to be dup'd by the profane opinions
Of rancorous pædagogues?

STREPSIADES.

Keep a good tongue;
Take heed you slander not such worthy men,

⁶⁵ He calls Socrates a Melian, insinuating that he is, like Diagoras of Melos, a profest despiser of the heathen deities. When this very comedy furnishes so many passages in direct contempt of those deities, the poet cannot be suppos'd to affix any great degree of criminality to his charge against him. The audience, that could endure the poet, might well excuse the philosopher.

So wise withal and learned, men so pure
 And cleanly in their morals, that no razor
 Ever prophan'd their beards; their unwasht hides
 Ne'er dabbled in a bath, nor waisted scent
 Of od'rous ungent as they pass'd along.
 But you, a prodigal fine spark, make waste
 And havoc of my means, as I were dead
 And out of thought—but come, turn in and learn.

PHIDIPPIDES.

What can I learn or profit from such teachers?

STREPSIADES.

Thou can'st learn every thing that turns to profit;
 But first and foremost thou can'st learn to know
 Thyself how totally unlearn'd thou art,
 How mere a blockhead and how dull of brain—
 But wait awhile with patience— (Exit.)

PHIDIPPIDES.

Woe is me!

How shall I deal with this old crazy father?
 What course pursue with one, whose reason wanders
 Out of all course? Shall I take out the statute
 And cite him for a lunatic, or wait
 Till nature and his phrenzy with the help
 Of the undertaker shall provide a cure?

(STREPSIADES returns.)

STREPSIADES.

Now we shall see! Lo! what have I got here?

PHIDIPPIDES.

ARISTOPHANES.

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PHIDIPPIDES.

A chicken—

STREPSIADES.

Well, and this?—

PHIDIPPIDES.

A chicken also.

STREPSIADES.

Are they the same then? Have a care, good boy,
How you expose yourself, and for the future
Describe them cock and hen chick severally.

PHIDIPPIDES.

Ridiculous! Is this the grand discovery
You have just borrow'd from these sons o' th' dunghill?

STREPSIADES.

This, and a thousand others—but being old
And lax of memory I lose it all
As fast as it comes in.

PHIDIPPIDES.

Yes, and methinks
By the same token you have lost your cloak,

STREPSIADES.

No, I've not lost it; I have laid it out
Upon the arts and sciences.

PHIDIPPIDES.

Your shoes—

They're vanish'd too. How have you laid them out?

G 3

STREPSIADES.

STREPSIADES.

Upon the commonwealth—Like ⁶⁶ Pericles
 I'm a barefooted patriot—Now no more ;
 Do as thou wilt, so thou wilt but conform
 And humour me this once, as in times past
 I humour'd thee, and in thy playful age
 Brought thee a penny go-cart from the fair,
 Purchas'd with what I had earn'd at the assize,
 The fee with my subpcena.

PHIDIPPIDES.

You'll repent,
 My life upon't ; you will repent of this.

STREPSIADES.

No matter, so you'll humour me—What hoa !
 Why Socrates, I say, come ferth, behold
 Here is my son ; I've brought him, tho' in faith
 Sorely against the grain.

(SOCRATES enters.)

SOCRATES:

Aye, he's a novice,
 And knows not where the panniers hang as yet.

PHIDIPPIDES..

I would you'd hang yourself there in their stead !

⁶⁶ He alludes to the sums that Pericles had expended in bribing the Lacedæmonian ephori, Cleander and Pliftianax.

STREPSIADES,

ARISTOPHANES.

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STREPSIADES.

Oh monstrous impudence ! this to your master !

SOCRATES.

Mark how the idiot quibbles upon *hanging*,
 Driv'ling and making mouths—Can he be taught
 The loopholes of the law ; whence to escape,
 How to evade and when to press a suit,
 Or tune his lips to that soft rhetoric,
 Which steals upon the ear, and melts to pity
 The heart of the stern judge?

STREPSIADES.

Come, never doubt him ;]

He is a lad of parts, and from a child
 Took wondrously to dabbling in the mud,
 Whereof he'd build you up a house so natural
 As would amaze you, trace you out a ship,
 Make you a little cart out of the sole
 Of an old shoe mayhap, and from the rhind
 Of a pomegranate cut you out a frog,
 You'd swear it was alive. Now what do you think ?
 Hath he not wit enough to comprehend
 Each rule both right and wrong ? Or if not both,
 The latter way at least ⁶⁷—There he'll be perfect.

⁶⁷ The account here given by the old man of his son's early talents is perfectly in character, and extremely pleasant. It also prepares the audience for the introduction of the allegorical characters of the just and unjust man, that are about to enter on the scene.

SOCRATES.

Let him prepare: His lecturers are ready.

STREPSIADES.

I will retire—When next we meet, remember
I look to find him able to contend
'Gainst right and reason, and outwit them both.

(Exit.)

⁶⁸ (DICÆUS and * ADICUS enter.)

DICÆUS.

Come forth; turn out, thou bold audacious man,
And face this company.

ADICUS,

* It is generally supposed, that after the departure of Strepsiades, and before the just and unjust personages enter on the stage, the Chorus had a preparatory address in the original copy, which is now irretrievably lost.

⁶⁸ The interlude, which now ensues between these allegorical personages, contending for the possession of their pupil Phidippides, after the manner of the Choice of Hercules, forms a very curious passage in this celebrated comedy. It is in some parts very highly elevated, in others very pointedly severe. The object of the poet is to bring before his audience the question between past and present education into full and fair discussion, comparing the principles of the schools then existing with the pure and moral discipline of former times, and though the advocate for sophistry is allowed to triumph over the patron of reason in the event of this mock trial, yet the poet has contrived to elicit a juster verdict from the Chorus, than he is willing to credit the spectators for: and we must acknowledge it is not without cause that he is thus severe in his reproaches for their partiality to the reigning system, when we recollect that the magistracy of Athens

ARISTOPHANES,

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ADICUS.

Most willingly ;
I do desire no better : take your ground
Before this audience, I am sure to triumph.

DICÆUS.

And who are you, that vapour in this fashion ?

ADICUS.

Fashion itself—the very stile of the times.

DICÆUS.

Aye, of the modern times, and them and you
I set at naught.

ADICUS.

I shall bring down your pride,

DICÆUS.

By what most witty weapon ?

ADICUS.

By the gift
Of a most apt invention.

DICÆUS.

Then I see
You have your fools to back you.

Athens had taken so strong a part with the philosophers against the stage, by silencing the comic writers to gratify the spleen of the Academies. To his own breast therefore, and to the breasts of the Chorus only, he appeals for justice, and obtains it ; the rest he consigns to depravity of judgment and corruption of principle,

ADICUS,

THE CLOUDS OF

ADICUS.

No, the wise
Are those I deal with.

DICÆUS.

I shall spoil your market,

ADICUS.

As how, good sooth?

DICÆUS.

By speaking such plain truths
As may appeal to justice.

ADICUS.

What is justice?
There's no such thing—I traverse your appeal,

DICÆUS.

How! No such thing as justice?

ADICUS.

No; where is it?

DICÆUS.

With the immortal gods.

ADICUS.

If it be there,
How chanc'd it ⁶⁹ Jupiter himself escap'd
For his unnatural deeds to his own father?

DICÆUS.

⁶⁹ These are strong words, and if the learned reader refers
to the original, throughout the whole of these short speakings,
I flatter

DICAËUS.

For shame, irreverent wretch, thus do you talk?
 I sicken at impiety so gross,
 My stomach kicks against it.

ADICUS.

You are craz'd;
 Your wits, old gentleman, are off the hinges.

DICAËUS.

You are a vile blasphemer and buffoon,

ADICUS.

Go on! you pelt me—but it is with roses.

DICAËUS.

A scoffer!

ADICUS.

Every word your malice vents
 Weaves a fresh wreath of triumph for my brows.

DICAËUS.

A parricide!

I flatter myself he will credit me for as close an adherence to my author, as our respective languages will admit of. To the whole of this curious altercation I have given my best attention, as I doubt not but the poet himself did when he conceived it. A bolder sally of heathen blasphemy than this is no where upon classic record, and though he checks the speaker with a strong reproof, yet the risque of uttering it on the stage at all events, and the good reasons we have to presume the audience passed it off with impunity, is at least a proof that the friends of Jupiter were not very zealous to revenge his affronts.

ADICUS.

ADICUS.

Proceed, and spare me not—
You shower down gold upon me.

DICÆUS.

Lead, not gold,
Had been your retribution in times past.

ADICUS.

Aye, but times present cover me with glory.

DICÆUS.

You are too wicked.

ADICUS.

You are much too weak.

DICÆUS.

Thank your own self, if our Athenian fathers
Coop up their sons at home, and fear to trust them
Within your schools, conscious that nothing else
But vice and folly can be learnt of you.

ADICUS.

Methinks, friend, your's is but a ragged trade.

DICÆUS.

And your's, oh shame! a thriving one, tho' late,
A perfect ⁷⁰Telephus, you tramp'd the street

With

⁷⁰ This is not the only passage in Aristophanes, nor is he the only comic poet who satirizes Euripides for his character of Telephus, charging him with having exhibited a spectacle too beggarly

With beggar's wallet cramm'd with hungry scraps
Of Pandeletus—pettifogging fare.

ADICUS.

Oh! what rare wisdom you remind me of!

DICÆUS.

Oh, what rank folly their's who rule this city,
And let it nourish such a pest as you,
To sap the morals of the rising age.

ADICUS.

You'll not inspire your pupil with these notions,
Old hoary headed time!

DICÆUS.

I will inspire him,

beggarly and disgusting to be suffered on the tragic stage. How the delicacy of an Athenian audience might resent that spectacle, is no question of criticism at the present moment; certain it is, that the language of Telephus has not degraded the stage, but has graces that might have atoned for the indecorum of his exterior, if in fact there was any. What the poet adds with respect to the contents of his beggar's wallet, which in place of crusts and fragments of food he furnishes with what he calls *Pandeletian* scraps or sentences, this is figuratively said in allusion to his malignity, Pandeletus being notorious to a proverb for his malignant and litigious character, and accordingly held up to ridicule by the comic poets, particularly by Cratinus in his play of *The Centaurs*: the sense of this passage, therefore, which in some copies is greatly corrupted, is, that he was as squalid as Telephus in his person, and as malicious as Pandeletus in his nature.

If

If he has grace, to shun the malady
Of your eternal clack.

ADICUS.

Turn to me, youth!
And let him rail at leisure.

DICÆUS.

Keep your distance,
And lay your hands upon him at your peril.

CHORUS.

Come, no more wrangling.—Let us hear you both;
You of the former time produce your rules
Of antient discipline—of modern, you—
That so, both weigh'd, the candidate may judge
Who offers fairest, and make choice between you.

DICÆUS.

I close with the proposal.

ADICUS.

'Tis agreed.

CHORUS.

But which of you shall open?

ADICUS.

That shall he:

I yield him up that point, and in reply,
My words like arrows levelled at a butt
Shall pierce him through and through; then if he
rallies,

If

If he comes on again with a rejoinder,
 I'll launch a swarm of syllogisms at him,
 That like a nest of hornets shall belabour him,
 Till they have left him not an eye to see with.

CHORUS.

" Now, sirs, exert your utmost care
 " And gravely for the charge prepare,
 " The well rang'd hoard of thought explore,
 " Where sage experience keeps her store ;
 " All the resources of the mind
 " Employment in this cause will find,
 " And he who gives the best display
 " Of argument shall win the day :
 " Wisdom this hour at issue stands,
 " And gives her fate into your hands ;
 " Your's is a question that divides
 " And draws out friends on different sides ;
 " Therefore on you, who with such zealous praise
 " Applaud the discipline of former days,
 " On you I call ; now is your time to shew
 " You merit no less praise than you bestow."

DICAËUS.

Thus summon'd I prepare myself to speak
 Of manners primitive, and that good time
 Which I have seen, when discipline prevail'd,
 And modesty was sanctioned by the laws.
 No babbling then was suffer'd in our schools,

The

The scholar's test was silence. The whole group
 In orderly procession sallied forth
 Right onwards, without straggling, to attend
 Their teacher in harmonies; tho' the snow
 Fell on them thick as meal, the hardy brood
 Breasted the storm uncloak'd: Their harps were strung
 Not to ignoble strains, for they were taught
 A loftier key, whether to chant the name
 Of Pallas, terrible amidst the blaze
 Of cities overthrown, or wide and far
 To spread, as custom was, the echoing peal.
 There let no low buffoon intrude his tricks,
 Let no capricious quavering on a note,
 No running of divisions high and low
 Break the pure stream of harmony, no ⁷¹Phrynis
 Practising wanton warblings out of place—
 Woe to his back that so was found offending!
 Hard stripes and heavy wou'd reform his taste.
 Decent and chaste their postures in the school
 Of their gymnastic exercises; none
 Expos'd an attitude that might provoke
 Irregular desire; their lips ne'er mov'd

⁷¹ Phrynis of Mitylene, the scholar of Aristoclydes, is frequently alluded to by the comic poets for having introduced a new species of modulation in music, deviating from the simplicity of the antient harmony. When Callias was archon, Phrynis bore away the prize for minstrelsy at the Panathenæa.

In love inspiring whispers, and their walks
 From eyes obscene were sacred and secure.
 Hot herbs, the old man's diet, were proscrib'd;
 No radish, anise, parsley, deck'd their board;
 No rioting, no revelling was there
 At feast or frolic, no unseemly touch
 Or signal, that inspires the hint impure.

ADICUS.

Why these are maxims obsolete and stale;
 Worm-eaten rules, coeval with the hymns
 Of old⁷² Cecydas and Buphonian feasts.

DICAÆUS.

Yet so were train'd the heroes, that embu'd
 The field of Marathon with hostile blood;
 This discipline it was that brac'd their nerves
 And fitted them for conquest. You, forsooth,
 At great Minerva's festival produce
 Your martial dancers, not as they were wont,
 But smother'd underneath a tawdry load
 Of cumbrous armour, till I sweat to see them
 Dangling their shields in such unseemly sort
 As marring the sacred measure of the dance.
 Be wise, therefore, young man, and turn to me,
 Turn to the better guide, so shall you learn

⁷² Cecydas, a dithyrambic poet of very early times; Cratinus mentions him in his *Panoptæ*. The Buphonian festival, so called from the sacrifice of the ox, was a very antient establishment.

To scorn the noisy forum, shun the bath,
 And turn with blushes from the scene impure :
 Then conscious innocence shall make you bold
 To spurn the injurious, but to reverend age
 Meek and submissive, rising from your seat
 To pay the homage due, nor shall you ever
 Or wring the parent's soul, or stain your own.
 In purity of manners you shall live
 A bright example ; vain shall be the lures
 Of the stage-wanton floating in the dance,
 Vain all her arts to snare you in her arms,
 And strip you of your virtue and good name.
 No petulant reply shall you oppose
 To fatherly commands, nor taunting vent
 Irreverent mockery on his hoary head,
 Crying—" Behold Iapetus himself !"
 Poor thanks for all his fond parental care.

ADICUS.

Aye, my brave youth, do, follow these fine rules,
 And learn by them to be as mere a swine,
 Driveler, and dolt, as any of the sons
 Of poor ⁷³ Hippocrates ; I swear by Bacchus,
 Folly and foul contempt shall be your doom.

DICÆUS.

Not so, but fair and fresh in youthful bloom
 Amongst our young athletics you shall shine ;

⁷³ Telestippus, Demophon, and Pericles, were sons of Hippocrates, proverbial for their stupidity.

Not in the forum loitering time away
In gossip prattle, like our gang of idlers,
Nor yet in some vexatious paltry suit
Wrangling and quibbling in our petty courts,
But in the solemn academic grove,
Crown'd with the modest reed, fit converse hold
With your collegiate equals ; there serene,
Calm as the scene around you, underneath
The fragrant foliage where the ilex spreads,
Where the deciduous poplar strews her leaves,
Where the tall elm-tree and wide stretching plane
Sigh to the fanning breeze, you shall inhale
Sweet odours wafted in the breath of spring.
This is the regimen that will insure
A healthful body and a vigorous mind,
A countenance serene, expanded chest,
Heroic stature and a temperate tongue ;
But take these modern masters, and behold
These blessings all revers'd ; a pallid cheek,
Shrunk shoulders, chest contracted, sapless limbs,
A tongue that never rests, and mind debas'd,
By their vile sophistry perversely taught
To call good evil, evil good, and be
That thing, which nature spurns at, that disease,
A meer ⁷⁴ Antimachus, the sink of vice.

⁷⁴ Of this Antimachus I collect nothing more, than that he was generally marked with contempt for his effeminacy and profligacy.

" CHORUS.

" Oh sage instructor, how sublime
 " These maxims of the former time !
 " How sweet this unpolluted stream
 " Of eloquence, how pure the theme !
 " Thrice happy they, whose lot was cast
 " Amongst the generation past,
 " When virtuous morals were display'd
 " And these grave institutes obey'd.
 " Now you that vaunt yourself so high,
 " Prepare ; we wait for your reply,
 " And recollect, or ere you start,
 " You take in hand no easy part ;
 " Well hath he spoke, and reasons good
 " By better only are withstood ;

" The poet having concluded his discussion of the antient discipline, in a very eloquent harangue (though perhaps out of place according to the rules of comedy, and somewhat of the longest) and being conscious of having given all the argument to the advocate for times past, contrives, through the vehicle of the Chorus, to point out to the audience how their consciences ought in moral justice to decide. It is in this scene only, that his attack upon the sophists is of a grave and solemn cast, in every other instance he combats them with the weapons of ridicule, for which the character of Strepsiades is most ingeniously contrived, and though he makes the worse reasoner triumph over the better, and bear away his pupil from him, yet it is a triumph gained by such low and despicable quibbles, such palpable and barefaced sophistry, that the success of the event is at once the severest satire he can vent upon the conqueror and his cause.

" Sharpen

"Sharpen your wits then, or you'll meet
 "Contempt as certain as defeat."

ADICUS.

Doubt not I'm ready, full up to the throat
 And well nigh choak'd with plethory of words,
 Impatient to discharge them. I do know
 The mighty masters of the modern school
 Term me the lower logic, so distinguish'd
 From the old practice of the upper time,
 By him personified; which name of honour
 I gain'd as the projector of that method,
 Which can confute and puzzle all the courts
 Of law and justice—An invention worth
 Thousands to them who practise it, whereas
 It nonsuits all opponents.—Let that pass.
 Now take a sample of it in the case
 With which I'll baffle this old vaunting pedant
 With his warm baths, that he forsooth forbids.
 Harkye, old man, discuss, if so it please you,
 Your excellent good reason for this rule,
 That interdicts warm bathing.

DICÆUS.

Simply this—

I hold it a relaxer, rendering men
 Effeminate and feeble.

ADICUS.

Hold awhile—

I have you on the hook. Answer me this—

H 3

Of

Of all the heroes Jupiter has father'd,
Which is for strength, for courage, and a course
Of labours, most renown'd ?

DICÆUS.

I know none
Superior in those qualities to Hercules.

ADICUS.

And who e'er heard ⁷⁶ Herculean baths were cold ?
Yet Hercules himself you own was strong.

DICÆUS.

Aye, this is in the very stile of the times ;
These are the dialectics now in fashion
With our young sophists, who frequent the baths
Whilst the palæstra starves.

ADICUS.

I grant you this ;
It is the stile of the times, by you condemn'd,
By me approv'd, and not without good cause ;
For how but thus doth antient Nestor talk ?
Can Homer err ? Were all his wise men fools ?
They are my witnesses.—Now for this tongue,
This member out of use by his decree,
Not so by mine.—His scholar must be silent

⁷⁶ Tepid baths, according to fabulous legends, being the gift of Vulcan to Hercules, it became a fashion to term all such Herculean.

And

And chaste withal—damping prescriptions both—
For what good fortune ever did betide
The mute and modest? Instance me a case.

DICÆUS.

Many—⁷⁷ Chaste Peleus so obtain'd his sword.

ADICUS.

His sword! And what did Peleus gain by that?
Battle and blows this modest Peleus gain'd,
Whilst mean Hyperbolus, whose wretched craft
Was lamp-making, by craft of viler sort
Garbel'd his thousands, solid coin, not swords.

DICÆUS.

But continence befriended Peleus so
As won the goddess Thetis to his bed.

ADICUS.

And drove her out of it—for he was cold,
Languid and listless; she was brisk and stirring,
And sought the sport elsewhere. Now are you an-
swered?

Good sooth you're in your dotage. Mark, young sir,

⁷⁷ Peleus having withstood the solicitations of Atalante, wife of Acastus, was rewarded for his continence, by the gods, with a sword of celestial temper, the workmanship of Vulcan. But Atalante having accused him to her husband, and stimulated Acastus to revenge a supposed attempt upon her honour, Peleus found himself driven to declare war against him, and to this Adicus alludes in his retort upon Dicæus.

These are the fruits of continence ; you see
 What pleasure you must forfeit to preserve it—
 All the delights that woman can bestow ;
 No am'rous sports to catch the fair one's smile,
 No luscious dainties shall you then partake,
 No gay convivial revels, where the glass
 With peals of laughter circulates around ;
 These you must sacrifice, and without these
 What is your life ?—So much for your delights.—
 Now let us see how stands your score with nature—
 You're in some scrape we'll say—intrigue—adultery—
 You're caught, convicted, crusht—for what can save
 you ?

You have no powers of speech—but arm'd by me
 You're up to all occasions : Nothing fear,
 Ev'n give your genius scope ; laugh, frolick, sport,
 And flout at shame ; for should the wittol spouse
 Detect you in the fact, you shall so pose him
 In his appeal, that nothing shall stick to you,
 For Jove shall take the blame from off your shoulders,
 Being himself a cuckold-making god,
 And you a poor frail mortal—Why should you
 Be wiser, stronger, purer than a god ?

DICÆUS.

But what if this your scholar shou'd incur
 The catamite's correction, pill'd and fanded
 And garnish'd with a radish in his crupper,

The

The scoff of all beholders—What fine quirk
Will clear him at that pinch, but he must pass
For a most perfect Ganimede?

ADICUS.

What then?

Where is the harm?

DICÆUS.

Can greater harm befall him?

ADICUS.

What will you say if here I can confute you?

DICÆUS.

Nothing—my silence shall confess your triumph.

ADICUS.

Come on then, answer me to what I ask.

Our advocates—what are they?

DICÆUS.

Catamites.

ADICUS.

Our tragic poets—what are they?

DICÆUS.

The same.

ADICUS.

Good, very good!—our dæmagogues—

DICÆUS.

No better.

ADICUS.

ADICUS.

See there ! discern you not that you are foil'd ?
Cast your eyes round this company.—

DICAËUS.

I do.

ADICUS.

And what do you discover ?

DICAËUS.

Numerous birds
Of the same filthy feather, so Heaven help me !
'This man I mark ; and this and this fine fop
With his coil'd locks—To all these I can swear.

ADICUS.

What say you then ?

DICAËUS.

I say I am confuted—

⁷⁸ Here, wagtails, catch my cloak—I'll be amongst you.

SOCRATES.

Now, friend, what say you ? who shall school your son ?

⁷⁸ Here ends this famous episode, reversing the Choice of Hercules, and making the spectators parties in the criminality and injustice of the decision. This short speech has been given in some copies to Phidippides, but it properly belongs to Dicaëus, whose action of throwing off his cloak alludes to Socrates's ceremony of stripping his disciples before they were initiated into his school.

STREPSIADES.

STREPSIADES.

School him and scourge him, take him to yourself,
And mind you whet him to an edge on both sides,
This for slight skirmish, that for stronger work.

SOCRATES.

Doubt not, we'll finish him to your content
A perfect Sophist.

PHIDIPPIDES.

Perfect skin and bone—
That I can well believe.

SOCRATES.

No more—Away!

PHIDIPPIDES.

Trust me you've made a rod for your own back.

(*Manet* CHORUS.)

Now to our candid judges we shall tell
What recompence they may expect from us,
If they indeed are studious to deserve it:
First, on your new-sown grounds in kindly showers,
Postponing other calls, we will descend.
The bearing branches of your vines shall sprout,
Nor scorcht with summer heats nor chill'd with rain.
This to our friends who serve us, but to him,
Who dares to slight us, let that mortal hear,
And tremble at the vengeance which awaits him:
Nor wine nor oil shall that man's farm produce;

For

For when his olive trees should yield their fruit,
 And his ripe vineyard tempts the gatherer's hand,
 We'll batter him to ruin, lay him bare;
 And if we catch him with his roof unroof'd,
 Heav'ns! how we'll drench him with a pelting storm
 Of hail and rain incessant; above all,
 Let him beware upon the wedding night;
 When he brings home his own or kinsman's bride,
 Let him look to't! Then we'll come down in torrents,
 That he shall rather take his chance in Egypt,
 Than stand the vengeful soaking we will give him.

(STREPSIADES *alone.*)

Lo! here's the fifth day gone—the fourth—the third—
 The second too—day of all days to me
 Most hateful and accurst—the dreadful eve,
 Ushering the new moon, that lets in the tide
 Of happy creditors, all sworn against me,
 To rack and ruin me beyond redemption.
 I like a courteous debtor, who would fain
 Soften their flinty bosoms, thus accost them—
 “Ah my good sir, this payment comes upon me
 “At a bad time, excuse me—That bill's due,
 “But you'll extend the grace—This you will cancel,
 “And totally acquit me.”—By no means;
 All with one voice cry out, they will be paid,
 And I must be be-knav'd into the bargain,
 And threaten'd with a writ to mend the matter—

We

Well, let it come!—They may ev'n do their worst;
I care not so my son hath learnt the trick
Of this new rhetoric, as will appear
When I have beat this door—Boy, boy! come forth!

(SOCRATES *comes forth.*)

SOCRATES.

Hail to Strepsiades!

STREPSIADES.

Thrice hail to Socrates!

But first I pray you take this dole of meal
In token of the reverence I bear you;
And now, so please you, tell me of my son,
Your late novitiate. Comes he on apace?

SOCRATES.

He apprehends acutely.

STREPSIADES.

Oh brave news!

Oh the transcendent excellence of fraud!

SOCRATES.

Yes, you may set your creditors at naught—

STREPSIADES.

And their avouchers too?—

SOCRATES.

Had they a thousand.

STREPSIADES.

Then I'll sing out my song, and sing aloud,

And

And it shall be—Woe, woe to all your gang,
 Ye money jobbing caitiffs, usurers, sharks!
 Hence with your registers, your cents-per-cent;
 I fear you not; ye cannot hook me now.
 Oh! such a son have I in training for you,
 Arm'd with a two-edg'd tongue that cuts o' both sides,
 The stay, support and pillar of my house,
 The scourge of my tormentors, the redeemer
 Of a most wretched father—Call him forth,
 Call him, I say, and let my eyes feast on him—
 What ho! My son, my boy—Your father calls;
 Come forth and shew yourself.

(PHIDIPPIDES enters.)

SOCRATES.

Behold him present!

STREPSIADES.

My dear—my darling—

SOCRATES.

Lo! you have your darling.

(PHIDIPPIDES enters.)

STREPSIADES.

Joy, joy, my son! all joy—for now you wear
 A face of the right character and cast,
 A wrangling, quibbling, contradicting face;
 Now you have got it neatly on your tongue—
 The very quirk o' th' time—"What's that you say?
 "What is it?"—Shifting from yourself the wrong
 To

To him that suffers it—an arch conceit
 To make a transfer of iniquity,
 When it has serv'd your turn—Yes, you will pass;
 You've the right Attic stamp upon your forehead.
 Now let me see a sample of your service,
 For sooth to say you owe me a good turn.

PHIDIPPIDES.

What vexes you, my father?

STREPSIADES.

What! the moon,
 This day both new and old.

PHIDIPPIDES.

Both in one day?

Ridiculous!

STREPSIADES.

No matter—'Tis the day
 Will bring my creditors upon my back
 All in a swarm together.

PHIDIPPIDES.

Let them swarm!
 We'll smother 'em if they dare so to misal
 One day as two days.

STREPSIADES.

What should hinder them?

PHIDIPPIDES.

What, do you ask? Can the same woman be
 Both young and old at once?

STREPSIADES.

STREPSIADES.

They speak by law:
The statute bears them out.

PHIDIPPIDES.

But they misconstrue
The spirit of the statute.

STREPSIADES.

What is that?

PHIDIPPIDES.

Time honour'd Solon was the people's friend—

STREPSIADES.

This makes not to the case of new or old.

PHIDIPPIDES.

And he appointed two days for the process,
The old and new day—for citation that,
This for discharge—

STREPSIADES.

Why did he name two days?

PHIDIPPIDES.

Why, but that one might warn men of their debts,
The other serve them to escape the payment;
Else were they laid by th' heels as sure as fate
On the new moon ensuing.

STREPSIADES.

Wherefore then
Upon the former day do they commence

Their doles and first fruits at the Prytaneum,
And not at the new moon?

PHIDIPPIDES.

Because, forsooth,
They're hungry feeders, and make haste to thrust
Their greedy fingers in the public dish.

STREPSIADES.

Hence then, ye witless creditors, begone!
We are the wise ones, we are the true sort;
Ye are but blocks, mob, cattle, empty casks—

“ Therefore with ecstacy I'll raise

“ My jocund voice in fortune's praise,

“ And oh rare son!—Oh happy me!

“ The burden of my song shall be;

“ For hark! each passing neighbour cries—

“ All hail, Strepsiades the wise!

“ Across the forum as I walk,

“ I and my son the public talk,

“ All striving which shall have to boast

“ He prais'd me first, or prais'd me most—

“ And now, my son, my welcome guest,

“ Enter my house and grace my feast.” (*Exeunt.*)

(PASIAS and a WITNESS.)

PASIAS.

Should this man be permitted to go on
At such a desperate rate? It must not be.
Better for him to have brok'n up at once

I

Than

Than to be thus beset. Therefore it is
That I am forc'd upon this hostile course,
Empowering you to summon this my debtor
For the recovery of my own—Good sooth,
I will not put my country to the blush,
But I must rouse Strepsiades—

(STREPSIADES *re-enters.*)

STREPSIADES.

Who's this?

PASIAS.

The old and new day calls upon you, sir.

STREPSIADES.

Bear witness that this man has nam'd two days—
And for what debt do you assail me thus?

PASIAS.

For twelve good pounds that you took up at interest
To pay for your son's racer.

STREPSIADES.

I a racer?

Do you not hear him? Can you not all witness
How mortally and from my soul I hate
All the whole racing calendar?

PASIAS.

What then?

You took the gods to witness you would pay me.

STREPSIADES.

STREPSIADES.

I grant you, in my folly I did swear,
But then my son had not attain'd the art
Of the new logic unconfutable.

PASIAS.

And have you now the face to stand it out
Against all evidence?

STREPSIADES.

Assuredly—

Else how am I the better for my schooling?

PASIAS.

And dare you, knowing it to be a falsehood,
Take the great gods to witness to your oath,
When I shall put it to you?

STREPSIADES.

What great gods?

PASIAS.

Mercurius, Neptune, Jupiter himself—

STREPSIADES.

Yes, and stake down three farthings as a handsel
That I will take the oath, so help me Jove!

PASIAS.

Insolent wretch, you'll perish in your folly.

STREPSIADES.

Oh! that this madman was well scrub'd with salt
To save his brains from addling!

I 2

PASIAS.

PASIAS.

Out upon't!

Do you make game of me?

STREPSIADES.

—I warrant me

He'll take at least six gallons for a dressing.

PASIAS.

So may great Jove and all the gods deal with me
As I will handle you for this buffoonery!

STREPSIADES.

I thank you for your gods—They're pleasant fellows—
And for your Jupiter, the learn'd and wise
'Tis hold him a very silly thing to swear by.

PASIAS.

'Tis well, rash man, 'tis well! The time will come

79 The exultation of Strepsiades upon receiving his son out of the hands of Socrates, the confidence with which he now faces creditors, of late so much dreaded, and the daring contempt he avows for Jupiter and the gods, are given with great comic-spirit, and in the boldest strain of satire, through the whole of this and the preceding scenes. The pretences he sets up for parrying the lawful demands of his creditors are so strictly deducible from the lectures he had received from the philosopher, that every thing either said or done by father and son is by the cunning of the poet contrived to spring so pointedly and precisely from the dictates of their master, that nothing is allowed to escape, for which he is not made responsible, whilst the school of Socrates is held up to the audience as the source of every species of fraud, injustice, and impiety; and all this is done with a subtlety, that only makes the aim more certain and the stroke more severe.

When

When you shall with these vaunting words unfaid.
But will you pay the debt or will you not?
Say, and dismiss me.

STREPSIADES.

Set your mind at rest;
You shall have satisfaction in a twinkling—

(*Steps aside.*)

PASIAS.

What think you of this chap?

WITNESS.

That he will pay you.

(*STREPSIADES returns.*)

STREPSIADES.

Where is this dun of mine? Come hither, friend,
How do you call this thing?

PASIAS.

A kneading trough,
Or as we say, a cardopus—

STREPSIADES.

Go to!

Dost think I'll pay my money to a blockhead,
That calls this kneading-trough a *cardopus*?

I tell you, man, it is a *cardopa*—

Go, go, you will not get a doit from me,

You and your *cardopus*.

PASIAS.

Will you not pay me?

13

STREPSIADES.

STREPSIADES.

Affure yourself I will not—Hence, begone!
Will you not beat your march, and quit my doors?

PASIAS.

I'm gone, but take this with you, if I live
I'll sue you in the Prytaneum before night.

STREPSIADES.

You'll lose your suit, and your twelve pounds besides.
I'm sorry for your loss, but who can help it?
You may ev'n thank your cardopus for that.

*(Exit PASIAS and WITNESS.)**(AMYNIAS enters followed by a WITNESS.)*

AMYNIAS.

Ah me, ah me!

STREPSIADES.

Who's that with his—Ah me?

Whom has ^{so} Carcinus sent amongst us now—
Which of his doleful deities?—

AMYNIAS.

Alas!

Would you know who I am? Know then I am
A wretch made up of woes—

^{so} He glances at Carcinus, a very voluminous tragic writer, to the amount of 160 dramas. He introduced some of the immortals in ridiculous situations, using the like doleful expressions as he puts here in the mouth of the money lender.

STREPSIADES.

STREPSIADES.

A woeful wretch—
Granted! pass on.

AMYNIAS.

Oh inauspicious chance!
Oh ye hard hearted, chariot breaking fates!
Oh! Pallas my destroyer, what a crash
Is this that you have giv'n me!

STREPSIADES.

Hah! what ails you?
Of what can you accuse ²¹ Tlepolemus?

AMYNIAS.

Mock not my miseries, but bid your son
Repay what he has borrow'd.

STREPSIADES.

Take me with you—
What should my son repay?

AMYNIAS.

The sum I lent him.

STREPSIADES.

Is that it? Then your case is desperate;
Truly you're out of luck.

²¹ This is a parody upon some passage in one of Carcinus's tragedies, or of his son Xenocles, in which Tlepolemus was probably the hero of the fable.

AMYNIAS.

I'm out of every thing—
I overthrew my chariot—By the gods
That's being *out*, I take it, with a vengeance.

STREPSIADES.

Say rather you are kick'd by an ⁸² ass—a trifle!

AMYNIAS.

But, fir, my lawful money is no trifle;
I shall not chuse to be kickt out of that.

STREPSIADES.

I'll tell you what you are—Out of your wits.

AMYNIAS.

How so?

STREPSIADES.

Because your brain seems wondrous leaky.

AMYNIAS.

Look to't! By Mercury, I'll clap you up
If you don't pay me.

STREPSIADES.

Hark'ye, one short question—
When Jove rains on us does he rain fresh water,
Or only vapours that the sun exhales?
Answer me that.

⁸² There is a play upon words in the original, which is not possible to transfuse into the translation. The learned reader will understand the difficulty.

AMYNIAS.

AMYNIAS.

I care not what he rains ;
I trouble not my cap with such conceits.

STREPSIADES.

And do you think a man, that has no wit
To argue these rare points, will argue me
Out of my money ?

AMYNIAS.

Let your debt go on,
And pay me up the interest.

STREPSIADES.

What is that ?
What kind of thing is that same interest ?

AMYNIAS.

A thing it is that grows from day to day,
And month to month, swelling as time rolls on
To a round sum of money.

STREPSIADES.

Well defin'd !
One question more—What think you of the sea ?
Is it not fuller now than heretofore ?

AMYNIAS.

No, by the Gods ! not fuller, but as full :
That is my judgment of it.

6

STREPSIADES.

STREPSIADES.

Oh thou miser !

That so would'st stint the ocean, and yet cram
 Thy swelling coffers till they overflow—
 Fetch me a whip, that I may lash him hence :
 Take to your heels—begone !

AMYNIAS.

I will convoke

My witnesses against you.

STREPSIADES.

Start ! set off !—

Do you take rest ?—away !

AMYNIAS.

Is not this outrage ?

STREPSIADES.

Will you not bolt ; will you not buckle kindly
 Into your geers, or must I mount and goad you
 Under the crupper till you kick and wince
 For very madness ? Oho ! Are you off ?
 A welcome riddance—All the devils drive
 You and your cursed chariot hence together.

*(Exeunt.)**Manet* CHORUS.

“ Mark here how rarely it succeeds
 “ To build our trust on guilty deeds :
 “ Mark how this old cajoling elf,
 “ Who sets a trap to catch himself,

“ Falsely

" Falsely believes he has found the way
 " To hold his creditors at bay.
 " Too late he'll curie the sophists' school,
 " That taught his son to cheat by rule,
 " And train'd the modest lips of youth
 " In the vile art of torturing truth;
 " A modern logic much in use,
 " Invented for the law's abuse;
 " A subtle knack of spying flaws
 " To cast in doubt the clearest cause,
 " Whereby, in honesty's despight,
 " The wrong side triumphs o'er the right—
 " Alas! short triumph he must have,
 " Who glories that his son's a knave:
 " ⁸³ Ah foolish sire, the time will come
 " You'll wish that son of your's were dumb."

STREPSIADES, PHIDIPPIDES, CHORUS.

STREPSIADES.

Hoa there! What hoa! for pity's sake some help!

⁸³ The moral and prophetic Chorus again denounces punishment and repentance upon the infamous expedients which this old fellow has resorted to for defrauding his creditors, and the succeeding incident fully verifies the prediction. I am fully persuaded there is no Greek drama now in our hands, where the Chorus takes a part so intimately connected with the plot, as in this comedy: here it is essential, and delivers those sentiments, which reason dictates, and the poet wishes to inspire into the minds of his hearers.—

Ob! si sic semper dixisset!

Friends,

Friends, kinsmen, countrymen! turn out and help!
 Oh! my poor head, my cheeks are bruised to jelly—
 Help by all means!—Why, thou ungracious cub,
 Thy father wouldst thou beat?

PHIDIPPIDES.

Affuredly.

STREPSIADES.

There, there! He owns that he would beat his father.

PHIDIPPIDES.

I own it, good my father!

STREPSIADES.

Parricide!

Impious assassin! Sacrilegious wretch!

PHIDIPPIDES.

All, all, and more—You cannot please me better;
 I glory in these attributes. Go on!

STREPSIADES.

Monster of turpitude!

PHIDIPPIDES.

Crown me with roses!

STREPSIADES.

Wretch, will you strike your parent?

PHIDIPPIDES.

Piously,

And will maintain the right, by which I do it.

STREPSIADES.

STREPSIADES.

Oh shameless villain! can there be a right
Against all nature so to treat a father?

PHIDIPPIDES.

That I shall soon make clear to your conviction.

STREPSIADES.

You, you convince me!

PHIDIPPIDES.

With the greatest ease:
And I can work the proof two several ways;
Therefore make choice between them.

STREPSIADES.

What do you mean?

PHIDIPPIDES.

I mean to say we argue up or down—
Take which you like. It comes to the same end.

STREPSIADES.

Aye, and a precious end you've brought it to,
If all my care of you must end in this,

That I have put you in the way to beat me,
(Which is a thing unnatural and profane)

²⁴ And after justify it.

PHIDIPPIDES.

²⁴ It is not easy to conceive any incident more pointedly severe than this, which the poet has employed for interesting the spectators in his attack upon the sophists. A son exhibited in the impious

PHIDIPPIDES.

That I'll do
By process clear and categorical,
That you shall fairly own yourself a convert
To a most wholesome cudgelling.

STREPSIADES.

Come on!
Give me your arguments—but spare your blows.

CHORUS.

How to restrain this headstrong son of your's
Behoves you now, old man, to find the means,
For sure he could not be thus confident
Without some cause; something there needs must be,
Some strong possession of himself within,
That buoys him up to this high pitch of daring,
This bold assumption; which that we may know,
Give us distinctively the whole detail
From first to last whence this contention sprung,
So shall we hear, and hearing judge betwixt you.

pious act of striking his father, and justifying the crime upon principle, is surely as bitter an invective against the schools of the philosophers as can be devised.

⁸⁵ The interposition of the Chorus in this place is peculiarly apposite, inasmuch as it draws out the relation of what had passed between the father and son, which neither of them could else have given, and which it is, however, important for the audience to hear.

STREPSIADES.

STREPSIADES.

So please you then I will the cause unfold
 Of this base treatment to your patient ears,
 And thus it stands—When we had sup'd together,
 As you all know, in friendly sort, I bade him
 Take up his lute and give me the good song
 *⁶ Of old Simonides, who shear'd his ram;
 But he directly scouted my request—
 It was a fashion out of date forsooth—
 He would not fit twanging the lute, not he;
 'Twas not for him to cackle o'er his wine,
 *⁷ As if he were some wench working the hand-mill—
 'Twas vulgar and unseemly—

PHIDIPPIDES.

Grossly so;
 And was it not high time that I should beat you,
 Who had no better manners than to set
 Your guest a chirping like a grasshopper?

STREPSIADES.

These were his very words, and more than these;
 For by and bye he told me that Simonides
 Was a most paltry poet. This you'll own

*⁶ Some popular ballad of Simonides the lyric poet, of which I can discover no other record.

*⁷ The women, whilst at work upon the hand mill, were in the custom of cheering their labour with a song, and these ballads were thence called *Επιμύλιαι ᾠδαι*.

Was

Was a tough morsel, yet I gulp'd it down,
 And pass'd it off with bidding him recite
 Some passage out of Æschylus, withal
 Tendering a myrtle wreath, as custom is,
 To grace the recitation—He forsooth,
 Flouting my tender, instantly replied—
 “ I hold your Æschylus, of all our poets,
 “ First of the spouters, incoherent, harsh,
 “ Precipitous and turgid.”—Oh my friends,
 Was not this more than flesh and blood should bear?
 Yet, yet I smother'd rage within my heart
 And calmly said—“ Call something else to mind
 “ More to your taste and from some modern bard,
 “ So it be good withal and worth the hearing—”
 Whereat, would you believe it? he began
 Repeating from Euripides—Great Jove,
 Guard my chaste ears from such another dose!
 A perilous long-winded tale of incest
 “ ’Twixt son and daughter of the same sad mother.
 Sick to the soul I spurn'd at such declaiming,
 Adding, as well I might, all that my scorn
 Of such vile trash could add; till, to be short,
 Words begat words, and blows too as it prov'd,

³⁸ Euripides formed a tragedy on the story of Macareus the son of Æolus, who violated his uterine sister Canace, for which crime he was put to death by his father. To this drama Ovid alludes in his Tr. 11. 384.—*Nobilis est Canace fratris amore sui.*

(Brunck.)

For

For leaping from his seat he sprung upon me,
Struck, buffeted, and bang'd me out of measure,
Throttled me, pounded me well nigh to dust—

PHIDIPPIDES.

And what less does that heretic deserve,
Who will not praise Euripides, the first
In wisdom of all poets?

STREPSIADES.

He the first!

How my tongue itches!—but the rogue is ready;
He'll beat me if I answer.

PHIDIPPIDES.

And with reason.

STREPSIADES.

What reason, graceless cub, will bear you out
For beating me, who in your baby age
Carefs'd you, dandled you upon my knee,
Watch'd every motion, humour'd all your wants?
Then if you lisped a syllable I caught it—
Bryn cried the bantling—strait I gave you drink:
²⁹ *Mamman* it mew'd—and that forsooth was bread:
Nay, I perform'd the nurse's dirtiest task,
And held you out before me at your needs;
And now in my necessity you show'd
No mercy to the pressing calls of nature,

²⁹ *Bryn, Mamman*, words of the nursery.

But having pummell'd me till my poor bowels
 Could hold no longer, kept me fast imprison'd
 To struggle with occasion as I could.

CHORUS.

Now every young man's heart beats an alarm,
 Anxious to hear his advocate's appeal;
 Which if he can establish, the same right
 By him asserted will on all devolve,
 And beating then will be so much in vogue
 That old men's skins will be reduc'd to cobwebs—
 Now you, that hold up this new paradox,
 Look well how you defend it, for it asks
 No trivial reasons to enforce persuasion.

PHIDIPPIDES.

How gratefully the mind receives new lights,
 Emerging from the shades of prejudice,
 And casting old establishments aside!
 Time was but now, when every thought of mine
 Was center'd in the stable; then I had not
 Three words upon my tongue without a stumble;
 But now, since I've been put into the way
 Of knowing better things, and the fine art
 Of subtile disputation, I am bold
 To meet this question, and convince my hearers
 How right it is to punish this old sinner.

STREPSIADES.

Mount, mount your chariot! Oh, that I could see you
 — Seated

Seated again behind your favourite horses,
 Tho' 'twere with four in hand, so that you kept
 From driving me at such a pelting rate.

PHIDIPPIDES.

Now then I ask you, gathering up my thread
 Where it was broken off, if you, my father,
 When I was but a stripling, spar'd my back?

STREPSIADES.

No, for I studied all things for your good,
 And therefore I corrected you.

PHIDIPPIDES.

Agreed.

I also am like studious of your good,
 And therefore I most lovingly correct you;
 If beating be a proof of love you have it
 Plenteous in measure, for by what exemption
 Is your most sacred carcase freed from stripes
 And mine made subject to them? Am not I
 Free born as you? Say, if the son's in tears,
 Should not the father weep?

STREPSIADES.

By what one rule

Of equity?

PHIDIPPIDES.

What equity were that
 If none but children are to be chastis'd?

And grant they were, the proverb's in your teeth,
Which says old age is but a second childhood.
Again, if tears are seen to follow blows,
Ought not old men to expiate faults with tears
Rather than children, who have more to plead
In favour of their failings?

STREPSIADES.

Where's the law
That warrants this proceeding? There's none such.

PHIDIPPIDES.

And what was your lawmaker but a man,
Mortal as you and I are? And tho' time
Has sanctified his statutes, may not I
Take up the cause of youth, as he of age,
And publish a new ordinance for leave
By the right filial to correct our fathers,
Remitting and consigning to oblivion
All ex-post-facto beating? Look at instinct—
Enquire of nature how the brute creation
Kick at their parents, which in nothing differ
From lordly man, except that they compile
No laws, and hold their rights without a statute.

STREPSIADES.

If you are thus for pecking at your father
Like a young fighting-cock, why don't you peck
Your dinner from the dunghil, and at night
Roost on a perch?

PHIDIPPIDES.

PHIDIPPIDES.

The cases do not tally,
Nor does my master Socrates prescribe
Rules so absurd.

STREPSIADES.

Cease then from beating me ;
Else you preclude yourself.

PHIDIPPIDES.

As how preclude ?

STREPSIADES.

Because the right I have of beating you
Will be your right in time over your son,
When you shall have one.

PHIDIPPIDES.

But if I have none,
All my sad hours are lost, and you die laughing.

STREPSIADES.

There's no denying that.—How say you, sirs ?
Methinks there is good matter in his plea ;
And as for us old sinners, truth to say,
If we deserve a beating we must bear it.

PHIDIPPIDES.

Hear me—there's more to come—

STREPSIADES.

Then I am lost,
For I can bear no more.

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PHIDIPPIDES.

PHIDIPPIDES.

Oh fear it not,
Rather believe what I have now to tell you
Will cause you to make light of what is past,
'Twill bring such comfort to you.

STREPSIADES.

Let me have it:
If it be comfort, give it me.

PHIDIPPIDES.

Then know,
Henceforth I am resolv'd to beat my mother
As I have beaten you.

STREPSIADES.

How say you? How?
Why this were to out-do all you have done.

PHIDIPPIDES.

But what if I have got a proof in petto
To shew the moral uses of this beating?

STREPSIADES.

Shew me a proof that you have hang'd yourself,
And with your tutor Socrates beside you
Gone to the devil together in a string,
Those moral uses I will thank you for—
Oh inauspicious goddesses, O Clouds!
In you confiding all these woes fall on me.

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

Evil events from evil causes spring,
And what you suffer flows from what you've done.

STREPSIADES.

Why was I not forewarn'd? You saw me old,
And practis'd on my weak simplicity.

CHORUS.

Tis not for us to warn a wilful sinner ;
We stay him not, but let him run his course,
Till by misfortunes rous'd, his conscience wakes,
And prompts him to appease th' offended gods.

STREPSIADES.

So I feel my sorrows, but I own them just :
Yes, ye reforming Clouds, I'm duly punish'd
For my intended fraud.—And now, my son,
Join hands with me and let us forth together
To wreak our vengeance on those base deceivers,
That Chærephon and Socrates the chief,
Who have cajol'd us both.

PHIDIPPIDES.

Grace forbid
I should lift up my hand against my masters.

So This appeal to the Chorus, their reply to it, and the old man's acknowledgment that he merited the punishment he met with, are finely introduced, and impress a very just and natural moral on the catastrophe of the fable.

STREPSIADES.

Nay, nay, but rather dread avenging Jove,
God of your ancestors, and him revere.

PHIDIPPIDES.

You're mad, methinks, to talk to me of Jove—
Is there a god so call'd?

STREPSIADES.

There is! there is!

PHIDIPPIDES.

There is no Jupiter I tell you so;
Vortex has whirl'd him from his throne, and reigns
By right of conquest in the thunderer's place.

STREPSIADES.

Tis false, no Vortex whirls but in my brain
When in my ecstasy I fancied you
An earthen deity, a farthing god.

PHIDIPPIDES.

Laugh at your own dull joke and be a fool!

STREPSIADES.

Insufferable blockhead that I was;
What ail'd me thus to court this Socrates,
Ev'n to the exclusion of the immortal gods?
O Mercury, forgive me; be not angry,
Dear tutelary god, but spare me still,
And cast a pitying eye upon my follies,
For I have been intemperate of tongue,

And

And dearly rue it—Oh my better genius,
 Inspire me with thy counsel how to act,
 Whether by legal process to assail them,
 Or by such apter means as thou may'st dictate.
 I have it! Well hast thou inspir'd the thought;
 Hence with the lazy law; thou art not for it.
 With fire and faggot I will fall upon them,
 And send their school *in fumo* to the Clouds.
 Hoa, Zanthias, hoa! bring forth without delay
 Your ladder and your mattock, mount the roof,
 Break up the rafters, whelm the house upon them,
 And bury the whole hive beneath the ruins.
 Haste! if you love me haste! Oh, for a torch,
 A blazing torch new lighted, to set fire
 To the infernal edifice.—I warrant me
 I'll soon unhouse the rascals, that now carry
 Their heads so high, and roll them in the dust.

(The School is attacked, and the Disciples run out)

FIRST DISCIPLE.

Fire! Fire!

STREPSIADES.

If fire is what you want, 'tis here;
 Torch, play your part, and you'll have fire enough.

FIRST DISCIPLE.

What are you doing, fellow?

STREPSIADES.

STREPSIADES.

Chopping logic ;
Arguing a knotty point with your house beams.

SECOND DISCIPLE.

Oh horror ! Who has set our house on fire ?

STREPSIADES.

The very man whose cloak you nabb'd so neatly.

SECOND DISCIPLE.

Undone and ruin'd— !

STREPSIADES.

Heartily I wish it—
And mean you shou'd so be if this same mattock
Does not deceive my hopes, and I escape
With a whole neck.

(SOCRATES comes forth.)

SOCRATES.

Ho! there ! What man is that ?
You there upon the roof—What are you doing ?

STREPSIADES.

Treading on air—contemplating the sun—

SOCRATES.

Ah me ! I'm suffocated, smother'd, lost—

(CHÆREPHON appears)

CHÆREPHON.

Wretch that I am, I'm melted, scorch'd, consum'd !—

STREPSIADES.

STREPSIADES.

Blasphemers, why did you insult the gods?
Dash, drive, demolish them! Their crimes are many,
But their contemptuous treatment of the gods,
Their impious blasphemies, exceed them all.

CHORUS.

Break up!—The Chorus have fulfill'd their part.

END OF THE COMEDY.

GENERAL NOTE.

I HAVE now compleated my undertaking, and present to my readers the comedy of the Clouds entire. Conscious that every original must suffer by translation, I have only to request allowances may be made for my author, as well as for myself; still I presume to hope I have caught enough of his spirit, stile, and meaning, to add something to the reputation of these Essays, without taking from that of the author of this celebrated drama. Let us for a moment assume what the poet lays down as the moral of his comedy, viz. that the doctrines of the sophists were pernicious to society, and the scheme here adopted for rendering them both ridiculous and detestable, will, I trust, be acknowledged most apposite and most excellent: Let us suspend for a while our enthusiasm for Socrates, and we cannot withhold our praise from Aristophanes.

It was not the practice of the writers of the old and personal comedy, to be strictly regular in the conduct
or

or construction of their fables; yet in this drama, if we except his address to the spectators, and, perhaps, his scene between the just and unjust declaimer (which is, in some degree, though not altogether, episodical) we find our poet strictly adhering to all the best rules of composition. His plot, simple, clear, and sufficiently interesting, opens upon the audience in a very masterly and striking stile, is wrought up and supported by a variety of comic incidents through the middle scenes, and in the catastrophe closes with great spirit and strict poetical justice, administered to the several characters which it employs. Of these, Strepsiades is the most prominent; a character ingeniously contrived to reflect the greatest possible ridicule upon the pedantry and chicanery of the sophists, by the comic contrast of his whimsical rusticity. A father, oppressed by debts and expences brought upon him by an extravagant and thoughtless son, flies to any resources, however evil, for extricating himself from his embarrassments; these resources he fancies he has discovered in the school of Socrates and Chærephon, and that school (how justly is not now the question) is put forward by the poet, and selected for the purpose of concentrating his attack to some determined point; he wages war against the sophists in general, but considering this famous school as their citadel, and its great master Socrates as their general, he manfully assails him, reserving Chærephon to the last scene only, in which he momentarily ap-
x
pears,

pears, but exhibiting Socrates personally upon the stage through the whole progress of the play.

It is true that the charge, upon which he was condemned many years after, is here strongly urged against him; and Strepsiades, who had been betrayed into a contemptuous disavowal of Jupiter and the gods, by the arguments of Socrates, makes a solemn recantation of his errors, charging them upon the philosopher; but in the very instant whilst he is debating within himself—

Whether by legal process to assail them—

He peremptorily rejects the idea, and proceeds to wreak his vengeance upon the school in a manner perfectly ludicrous, and evidently contrived for mere farcical effect. Had the life of the philosopher been his aim, could we suppose him a party in the cabal of Anytus and Melitus, here would have been an opportunity for laying the foundation of a *legal process*, which, on the contrary, he altogether puts aside, and batters him with mere stage artillery—*telum imbelle, sine ictu.*

The fact evidently appears, that as for Jupiter and the popular gods, Aristophanes cares as little for them, as he supposes the philosopher to do. The tragic poets, indeed, treated them with respect, because it was for their purpose to uphold them; in their solemn subjects, especially of the Homeric cast, every thing moves at the will and disposition of the immortal deities; but the comic authors seem to have spared the gods as little

as they did mankind; and it is not in this comedy alone, but in every other now remaining, that we find Aristophanes treating them with the most undisguised and daring contempt. To the deities of Socrates, who form the chorus in this play, he has been infinitely more gracious, having assigned to them a part highly honourable for its morality, and replete with sentiments both interesting and instructive. Had he been a true believer, he would never have invented blasphemies for Strepsiades so pointedly of his own suggestion, but would either have retailed them from Socrates in his very words, or marked them with the strongest abhorrence upon their delivery, whereas, on the contrary, he seems to hug the occasion for insulting them, and enjoys the jest of his own making.

And now, if the English reader can find amusement in the perusal of this translated comedy, I have gained one principal object in the undertaking; but I am bold enough to hope the learned reader will be at the trouble of comparing it with the original, to which I flatter myself he will find it as close as the languages can approximate. I believe no translation from the Latin can, in the nature of things, be so near. I have only to add, that in the progress of the work, which has been long in hand, I made suit to many learned men for the assistance of their remarks, but obtained not one word in answer from any one of them, but civil apologies for declining my request; I therefore stand responsible
for

for the whole, and shall candidly and thankfully attend to any true and liberal criticisms, which the private readers, or public reviewers of this translation, shall be pleased to honour it with.

Richard Cumberland.

October 20th, 1797.



